Flying Snake

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FLYING SNAKE SUBSCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES

ESTABLISHED BY RICHARD MUIRHEAD AKA DR DEVO IN 2011

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Dr Devo`s Diary

Well here we are again with a veritable smorgasbord of cryptozoological and Fortean stories for you, sadly not quite completed in time for the festive season, but in time for the first month of 2023 anyway. First of all I`ll get the bad news out of the way: I have decided to take the advice of some family members on board and raise the price of Flying Snake from £3.99 to £5.99 from issue 26 onwards. This is to cover the cost of second class postage. Since issue 1 in 2011 I have covered the cost of all postage myself but I hope you understand that in these times of economic recession it is no longer sensible for me to do this. Those of you who rely on your automatic Pay Pal subscriptions renewing-don`t worry I`m sure this can be reviewed and sorted out. Now onto the contents of issue 25: I include part 2 of the story of the Oxenham bird omen which was started in issue 24 of Flying Snake. I also have a major study, with Shane Lea of the Yakumama , a cryptid giant snake from South America. I include a study of the Nandi Bear of Africa by Dr Karl Shuker, which was actually his Shuker Nature blog of April 27th 2022. Ulrich Magin contributes again with two essays, on jumping snakes and snakes in New Zealand, which like Ireland *officially* has no snakes but in fact very occasionally does. Loes Modderman is here again, this time with a contribution on the curious Mandela Effect. Richard George features quite prominently in this issue of Flying Snake, drawing our attention to the story (which reached the mainstream media) of the occurrence of the greater white-toothed shrew in Britain. Richard also features in a study of enigmatic birds uncovered by the Bords, who have written more than twenty books on Fortean topics since 1972. I also include an interview with Carol Scott, author of The Cryptids of Oceania and Asia (see back cover). This just leaves enough space to say I hope you had a happy festive season and all the best for 2023!

The Oxenham Bird Omen Part 2

wards recovered. The profound impression made on the minds of the survivors by these preternatural occurrences may be inferred from the desire to record them permanently in the somewhat unusual form of an inscription on a monument.

The allusion in the tract to this monument, which, with the approval of the bishop, was intended to be erected in the church—which thing, we are told, was accordingly performed by the care and labour of Edward Marshall, tomb maker, under St. Dunstan's Church in the West, in Fleet Street—leads us, in the progress of the story, to another publication of a few years later date, which it is indispensable to take in connection with the tract. This book, to which I alluded at the commencement of this paper, was the *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ; or, Familiar Letters,* of James Howell.* The first edition of the first series of these letters was published in the year 1645, four years after the tract had appeared. In it is a letter, relating, it would seem, to the monument referred to in the tract, which has been made the basis of most of the ordinary notices of the story. Howell was no mere catch-penny writer, although Cibber somewhat maliciously says that he introduced the trade of writing for bread, which would be curious if it were true. He was a man of considerable literary attainments, and one of Ben Jonson's adopted sons. Granger says of him that he "was master of more modern languages, and author of more books, than any man of his time." About the year 1642, for political reasons, he was sent by a Committee of Parliament to the Fleet, and there confined for eight years. According to Anthony à Wood, many of the letters were not written until the author of them was in prison, and then were purposely published to relieve his necessities. These fascinating *Letters,* the best known of Howell's works, are written in a graceful, flowing style, unusual in the literature of the period. They lightly and graphically sketch the observations which the writer made in his journeys over the greater part of Europe; are full of anecdote and epigram; and give his passing views on the philosophy, the politics, and the events of the times in which he lived. This and *Montaigne* were the two "bed-side books" of Thackeray:—"If I wake at night I have one or other of them to prattle me to sleep again." For the purpose of this paper, it will be desirable to give the entire letter

* *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ: Familiar Letters, Domestic and Forren, &c.* By J. H., Esq., one of the Clerks of His Majesties most Honourable Privy Councell. London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley; and are to be sold at his shop at the Prince's Arms in S. Paul's Church-yard. 1645.

which has been referred to, as it appears in the earliest edition of the work. It is numbered IX. in sect. 6, p. 18, of the volume described:

"To Mr. E. D.

"*Sir*,—I thank you a thousand times for the Noble entertainment you gave me at *Berry*, and the pains you took in shewing me the Antiquities of that place. In requitall, I can tell you of a strange thing I saw lately here, and I beleeve 'tis true: As I pass'd by Saint Dunstans in Fleet-street the last Saturday, I stepp'd into a Lapidary or Stone-cutters Shop, to treat with the Master for a Stone to be put upon my Fathers Tomb; And casting my eies up and down, I might spie a huge Marble with a large Inscription upon't, which was thus, to my best remembrance:

"*Here lies* John Oxenham *a goodly young man, in whose Chamber, as he was strugling with the pangs of death, a Bird with a White-brest was seen fluttering about his Bed, and so vanish'd.*

"*Here lies also* Mary Oxenham *the sister of the said* John, *who died the next day, and the same Apparition was seen in the Room.*

"Then another sister is spoke of. Then, *Here lies hard by* James Oxenham, *the son of the said* John, *who died a child in his cradle a little after, and such a Bird was seen fluttering about his head, a little before he expir'd, which vanish'd afterwards.*

"At the bottom of the Stone ther is,

"*Here lies* Elizabeth Oxenham, *the Mother of the said* John, *who died 16 yeers since, when such a Bird with a White-Brest was seen about her Bed before her death.*

"To all these ther be divers Witnesses, both Squires and Ladies, whose names are engraven upon the Stone: This Stone is to be sent to a Town hard by *Excester*, wher this happen'd.

"Were you here, I could raise a choice discours with you hereupon. So hoping to see you the next Term, to requite som of your favours, I rest

"Your true Friend to serve you, J. H."

Howell, it will be observed, himself states that he wrote what is purported to be a copy of the inscription from his "best remembrance;" and, if so, there can be no doubt that his memory signally failed him; for, with the exception of the first paragraph, which naturally fixed itself more definitely on his mind, all the others differ, and differ considerably, from the statement in the tract, both in the Christian names and in the relationship to each other of the individuals mentioned. This was pointed out by the Messrs. Lysons, who also detected the anachronism in the date appended to the letter in most editions of the work, "July 3, 1632;" that is, three years (according to the tract) before the principal events occurred.

A critic less fair or less cautious than the Lysonses were would perhaps hastily assume that there was here sufficient reason for rejecting Howell's statement as altogether apocryphal. Dr. Birch, in fact, made this and other discrepancies the ground of a severe attack upon the genuineness of the letters; and Gough, in his additions to Camden's *Britannia* (ed. 1806, vol. i. p. 62), strangely enough, took it for granted that the monument and the tract related to two different sets of events, an assumption which is certainly not admissible. It may be easily conjectured that a careless or slovenly editor interpolated the dates at random, and not always with sufficient regard to the subject matter, in the later editions.* As a matter of fact there is *no date* to the letter now in question in the *first* edition of the work, from which I have quoted. It is believed that Howell's letters are of the class which is termed "imaginary;" that is to say, that they were not sent, nor intended to be sent, to the persons to whom they are addressed. That this is very probably the case, especially with the later letters, which were certainly written during Howell's incarceration in the Fleet, there is no reason to doubt. It will be apparent therefore that I attach no importance whatever to the anachronism. With regard to the presumed inaccuracies in Howell's description of the monument, they do not prove, or even suggest, that the incident itself of his visit to the stone-cutter's shop was fictitious; and, while the very discrepancies between that description and the narrative in the tract are evidence that Howell was not acquainted with the latter, and wrote independently, the evidently undesigned coincidences between them convince me that the monument which the author of the tract alluded to had a real existence, and that Howell saw it. It may be thought that I have devoted undue space to Howell; but it will be seen in the course of this paper that upon his evidence, whatever it may be worth, chiefly rests the confirmation of the statement in the tract.

And yet it appears almost fatal to belief in the veracity of both Howell and the author of the tract when we find the Lysonses stating that, not only was this monument not existing in their time at Zeal Monachorum, but that there was no trace of the Oxenham family in the register, church, or churchyard

* The following comparison will illustrate in an amusing way this inconsistency. In a letter of May 1, 1632, Howell is made to acknowledge the receipt of news of his father's death, and on the 5th of the same month to address a letter to him. But a cursory glance at the first half-dozen letters in the book is enough to satisfy one that no reliance is to be placed upon the dates appended to them.

of that parish. It is impossible not to be surprised at this singular absence of corroboration where one might have most expected to find it. The statement of the Messrs. Lysons seems conclusive; but it is really not so. I am not prepared to assert that I have verified the fact that the name of Oxenham nowhere occurs in the parish register of Zeal Monachorum; still it is remarkable that in the register of burials there are to be found only four entries in the year 1635—viz., of the dates May 26, September 18, and October 18; but between the two first of these there is a fatal hiatus, caused by a portion of the leaf—just so much as would have been occupied by the entries of the four deaths of the Oxenhams (all, it will be remembered, occurring between those two dates) —having been cut out. Whether this flagrant act was perpetrated before or subsequent to the time of the Lysonses it is now impossible even to conjecture. On the former supposition, if the statement of those authors was derived from personal inspection, the omission would doubtless have seemed suspicious, and would have led to further enquiry; but there is no reason to believe that they saw the register at all, and, if so, the information which they recorded, and which was doubtless communicated to them, although literally true, is nevertheless not the whole truth, and is eminently unsatisfactory. I have examined the register of South Tawton, on the supposition that the burials of the four persons who died, according to the narrative, in the month of September, 1635, may have taken place in that parish; but if so they were not recorded there. The entry of the burial of Grace Oxenham, to whom the omen is stated to have previously appeared, does, however, occur:

"1618. Gratia uxor Johañs Oxenham sepult. Secundo die Septem."

This, to some small extent, it will be seen, is confirmatory of the narrative.

Polwhele, whose enquiry, a generation earlier than that of the Lysonses, was perhaps instinctively directed rather to South Tawton, says, in the second volume (published in 1793) of his *History of Devonshire*, "The prodigy of the white bird, which I have noticed among the superstitions* of this county, seems to be little known at present to the common people at S. Tawton; nor can I find anywhere a trace of the marble stone which Mr. Howell saw in the lapidary's shop in London." (pp. 65, 66.)

* This part of the work does not, however, appear to have been printed.

In Sir William Pole's *Collections* (published in 1791) there occurs the following passage, relating to the Oxenham family: "Oxenham, the land of Will^m Oxenham, the father of John, the grandfather of Will. father of another John, grandfather of James, whose tombstone respects a strange wonder of this famyly, that at theire deaths were still seen a bird with a white brest, which fluttering for a while about theire beds suddenly vanisht away, which divers of y^e same place belive, being eye witnesses of." (p. 244.) With the exception of the first six words, the whole of this passage is printed in italics in the original, the signification of which is that this part of the paragraph was supplied by Sir John Pole, Baronet, Sir William Pole's eldest son and successor. Sir John Pole died in 1658; his father had died in 1635, the same year in which the alleged appearances took place; we have therefore an approximation to the date when this part, at least, of the paragraph was written. In the absence of any early pedigree of the Oxenham family (it does not appear in the Herald's Visitation either of 1564 or 1620) it is impossible to verify Sir John Pole's account of the successive generations. It would seem to point to another instance of the apparition, different from those elsewhere recorded; but from his mention of the monument, I shall probably be not far wrong in conjecturing that he was quoting from merely oral evidence, founded perhaps upon the account in the printed tract, but which (as he is not quite accurate) he had not seen, or at least had not got before him.

The episode of the monument has this curious sequel, that, notwithstanding repeated inquiries, no trace of the interesting memorial has ever been found in Devonshire. Although the passage in the tract is not quite clear, it certainly leads to the inference that the monument was actually erected, and, if anywhere in the county, it is reasonable to suppose that it would have been either at Zeal Monachorum or at South Tawton; but there is nothing, beyond that vague statement, to show that it was at any time seen in either of those parishes, or in fact anywhere in the county. It has been suggested that it may have been "improved away" in the process of church restoration. I am not concerned to defend church-restorers, who have doubtless many such sins to answer for; but the monument was missing long before the modern fashion of restoration set in. The church of Zeal Monachorum does not appear to have sustained any alterations in recent times that would lead one to suspect any such sweeping destruction of old memorials.

There are, as a matter of fact, none of these now to be found there. The church of South Tawton underwent the process last year. Incised floor-stones, bearing dates early in the seventeenth century, have been preserved, and are still there; but I am assured by the vicar, the Rev. F. J. Clarke, that no traces of the missing monument were discovered at the time when the alterations were in progress. I am not prepared to assert that the destruction of the monument may not have occurred during a former wave of improvement, or "beautifying," as it was then sometimes called, in the last century, when many of such records were undoubtedly swept away without compunction. Still it is inconceivable how a remarkable memorial, which, to say nothing of its unique local associations, must have been a prominent object in the place where it may have been erected—and Howell, it will be remembered, described it as "a huge marble"—could have been so easily disposed of. Nor is it likely that it would have been obnoxious to the iconoclastic zeal of the Puritans at a still earlier period, or that any other motive, that we can now see, could have arisen at any time for its deliberate removal. Gough, in his additions to Camden's *Britannia*, commenting on this question, fancied that the monument "never reached Devon." This is not at all improbable. The troubles of the Civil War, which supervened, may have been the cause of its remaining neglected, and perhaps forgotten, in Edward Marshall's shop, until (it may be) it was destroyed in the great fire of London. At all events the history of the monument, subsequently to the notice of it by Howell, is at this time as entirely unknown to the Oxenham family as it is to the rest of the world.

Howell's narrative seems to have gained much notice in philosophical circles. It had irresistible attractions for the learned antiquary Dr. Plot, who made the prodigy one of the chief objects of his intended investigation in connection with his project for journeying through England, after the example of Leland, for the discovery of "antiquities and other curiosities." Prince quoted it with commendable reservation in his *Worthies of Devon*, from which storehouse of historical materials connected with the county it has been passed on by numerous writers. The *Familiar Letters* went through many editions from 1645 to 1754; therefore, for a century the mysterious story which the book contained had been circulating, and, what is more, undoubtedly settling into a confirmed family belief. According to the view of the case

adopted by the Messrs. Lysons, the time was now ripe for another appearance of the phantom, and, as they remark, "this tradition of the bird had so worked upon the minds of some of the members of the family that it was supposed to have been seen by William Oxenham, who died in 1743." They then go on to relate this particular instance, which is given on the authority of a note in the MS. collections of William Chapple, the reviewer of Risdon. Mr. Chapple, it appears, "had the relation from Dr. Bent, who was brother-in-law to Mr. Oxenham, and had attended him as a physician. The story told is, that when the bird came into his chamber, he observed upon the tradition as connected with his family, but added, he was not sick enough to die, and that he should cheat the bird; and that this was a day or two before his death, which took place after a short illness."* There is a mural monument in the south aisle of South Tawton church to the memory of William Oxenham, Esq., who died, "much lamented by his friends," December 10, 1743, in the 65th year of his age. Presumably, therefore, the event, and the omen which presaged it, happened at Oxenham House.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of April, 1862, a *résumé* of some of the most familiar notices of the Oxenham tradition was given by a well-known antiquary, Mr. William Sidney Gibson, of Tynemouth. An abstract from a manuscript copy of a letter is the only absolutely new matter in Mr. Gibson's communication. The date of this letter is obviously incorrect (which Mr. Gibson also noticed), as it will be seen that it is two years antecedent to that of Mr. Oxenham's death, which has just been related; and there can be no doubt, from internal evidence, that the letter refers to the same event, of which it gives some further particulars, and from a different source. The abstract is as follows:

"I have received an answer from the country in relation to the strange bird which appeared to Mr. Oxenham just before his death, and the account which Dr. Bertie gave to Lord Abingdon of it is certainly true. It first was seen outside the window, and soon afterwards by Mrs. Oxenham in the room, which she mentioned to Mr. Oxenham, and asked him if he knew what bird it was. 'Yes,' says he, 'it has been upon my face and head, and is recorded in history as always appearing to our family before their deaths; but I shall cheat the Bird.' Nothing more was said about it, nor was the bird taken notice of from that time; but he died soon afterwards. However odd this affair may seem, it is certainly true; for the account was given of it by Mrs. Oxenham herself, but she

* *Magna Britannia*, vol. vi. p. 484.

never mentions it to anyone, unless particularly asked about it; and as it was seen by several persons at the same time, I can't attribute it to imagination, but must leave it as a phenomenon unaccounted for."

"The letter," according to Mr. Gibson, "appears to have been written not very long afterwards. It was taken, in 1823, from a blank leaf of a copy of Howell's *Familiar Letters*, which belonged to the then principal of Jesus College. It does not appear whence the letter is derived, but it is stated to be 'from J. Short, Middle Temple, to George Nares, jun., Albury,' and is dated December 24, 1741."

Mr. Gibson inferred that the Dr. Bertie mentioned in this letter was the same person as the Dr. Bent referred to in Chapple's MSS. But the informant, I believe, was the Hon. Charles Bertie, LL.D., Professor of Natural Philosophy at Oxford, and at that time Rector of Kenn, Devon. He was a son of James, first Earl of Abingdon, and a brother of Lady Anne Courtenay, wife of Sir William Courtenay, of Powderham Castle. How it happened that this was the channel through which the information originally came is sufficiently obvious. Mrs. Oxenham was the only child and heiress of William Longe, Esq., of Newhouse, in the parish of Mamhead.* In Dr. Bertie's time Mrs. Oxenham had erected a monument to her father and mother in Kenn church, where the ancestors of the Longes lay buried. The incident of the appearance of the omen before Mr. Oxenham's death no doubt had been talked of in private circles. Of Dr. Bent's individuality there can be no doubt. He was a physician, practising at Crediton, and afterwards at Exeter; his descendants are living, and still claim relationship to the Oxenham family. Now both Dr. Bertie and Dr. Bent were intelligent observers. We may go further, and assume, from what we know of them, that they were observers of more than average intelligence; and each in his own way appears to have had exceptionally favourable opportunities of knowing all the circumstances of this particular case. Their versions of the story, it is true, have reached us only at second-hand; but they have come through independent channels, and agree in every detail. The impression given us I think will be that the Oxford professor and the Exeter physician had convinced themselves of the reality of the

* Who that knows Newhouse will readily forget the grand old twisted and gnarled trunks of Spanish chestnuts—the relics of radiating avenues of those trees which must have been in existence before the place came into the possession of the Longe family?

The Yacumama

Shane Lea and Richard Muirhead

There are many stories of giant snakes from around the world within the realm of cryptozoology, particularly from Africa and South America, but also, and this is less well known, from the United States and Guyana and Brazil.The earliest encounter with a giant snake that we could find was the confrontation between a Roman regiment and a giant snake in the year 255 B.C during the First Punic War. The Roman general Regulus encountered and eventually killed the 120ft long serpent on the banks of the river Bagradus in modern Tunisia.

According to Wikipedia: " Yacumama means "Mother of water" (from Quechua yaku "water" and mama "mother"), referring to an enormous serpent believed to live in the Peruvian Amazon Rainforest. The Yacumama is believed to be the mother of all creatures of the water. According to legend, the Yacumama would suck up any living thing that passed within 100 steps of it. To protect themselves, the local indigenous peoples would blow on a conch horn before entering the water, believing that the yacumama would reveal itself if it was present. It is sometimes believed to be a giant snake or caecilian known as the Minhocão. In North America, the Cherokee Indians told a similar legend of Tlanusi, a leech the size of a house that dwelt in the Hiwassee River near present-day Murphy, North Carolina. " (1)

According to Cryptid Wiki, Sightings: "In the 1900s, a boat of 2 men went to put an explosive into the river, in hopes to kill the Yacumama. After it detonated, the snake rose from the river covered in blood, but not dead. The snake swam off, and left the men with a lot of fear. Possible explanations : Some people believe this creature to be the extinct snake known as titanoboa, a snake that grew around 12 meters, and some scientists speculate that it may have grew larger."(2) Further information pertaining to the Yacumama can be found on the web site https://www.bigsnakes.info/research-file.html as follows:

“El Popular Newspaper, Iquitos, Amazon, Peru 13th November 2009 (TRANSLATION)

GIANT BOA FRIGHTENS VILLAGERS

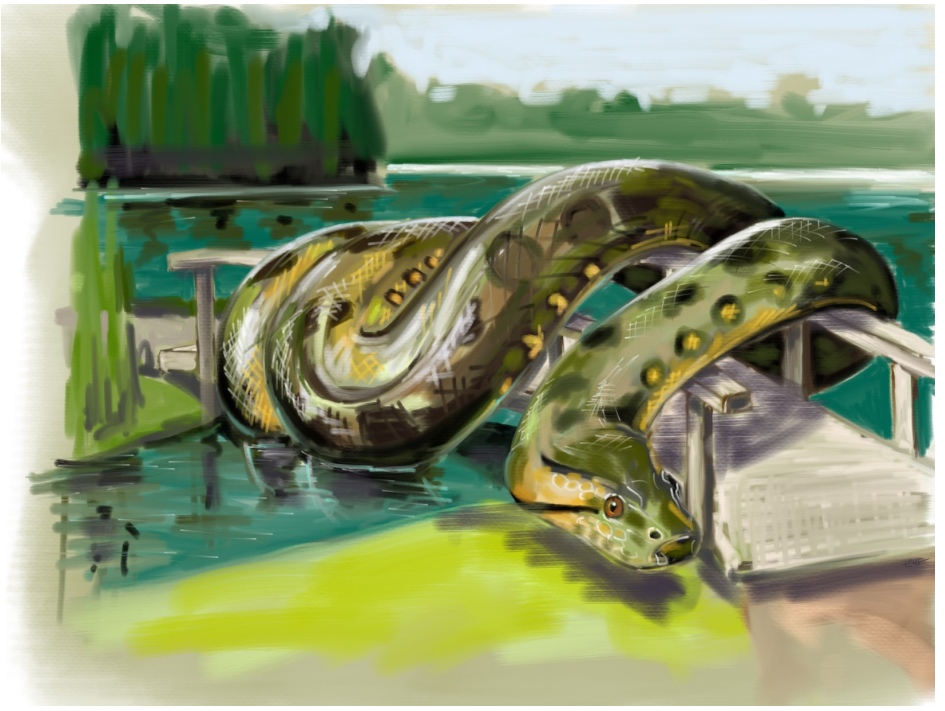
"Dwellers are afraid at AH Juan Pablo de la Luz in the district of San Juan Buastista, because they are sure that a giant boa is round the area. When heavy rains were falling, the neighbours said they heard sounds similar to those of a tractor, but no one dared to leave their house to see what it was. In the morning there was a track 20 meters long and 5 wide, enough proof for the people of the presence of a boa who now fear for their lives."

AH Juan Pablo

Excerpt from statements below: Carlos Zumba Reategui- neighbour who lives right near the site 45-50 meters away. (lot 26, AH 25 de Mayo, San Juan Bautista)

*“*for us, here in this place, for the first time it was a big surprise. as it was getting dark that day we had a big rain, we could see that a big storm was forming, thundering in the distance…wind and rain was falling.. We got very preoccupied.. Time passed.. 8PM- 9PM it was raining already hard, in this sector and also rays were falling hard, hard. And it was lightening immense like flames, we were scared, I didn’t even want to go out, because I was scared indeed" Once again, lightning storms are associated with Black Boa sightings and emerging from the ground (Sachamama, translated Mother of the Earth/ Jungle).

Note the Arum Plants & Aguaje Trees which were growing on & near the cocha (waterhole) that the snake emerged from.



The Yacumama © Erika Groeneveld

The snake comes up from the ground in a grass field on the edge of the settlement.

Note the Arum Plants & Aguaje Trees which were growing on & near the cocha (waterhole) that the snake emerged from.

Arum: Dracunculus vulgaris (aka Arum dracunculus) is variously called the Dragon Arum, Voodoo Lily, Ragons, Snake Lily, Black Arum, Black Dragon, Dragonwort, & Stink Lily. In Greece it is called Drakondia, the dragon or serpent being the long spadex inside the enormous maroon-lipped spathe.

AGUAJE (Mauritia Flexuosa): Aguaje is one of the representative plants of the Peruvian Amazon. It grows wild in marshes of flooding zones and in the small valleys hidden in high parts. Within the Cosmo vision of the original towns, as is in the case of the Yagua ethnic group, it is considered as the "tree of the life" and a symbol of immortality. The Cocama-Cocamilla calls it “bread tree”. The ancient Sumerians also referred to the fruit as bread. (3)

Returning to giant snakes in Brazil, there is a story in Eagle Clan Arawak Monsters by Damon Corrie (CFZ Press, 2022) of a giant snake which may have resembled the Yacumama, in the Rio Jamunda river: “ In the same area, in 1948,an old pupil of Father Heinz—Paul Tarvalho-had a sighting of his own. He observed,from a distance of some 900 feet, a gargantuan snake emerge from the water. Tarvalho estimated it to be fully fifty metres (167 feet) long! Cryptozoologist Dr Karl Shuker is rather dismissive of the Yacumama. He states simply in his Secret Snakes and Serpent Surprises (Coach - whip Publications, 2022) “The local name given to the black anaconda is the yacumama, which translates as “mother of the

water." (4)

Mike and Greg Warner made an expedition in March 2009 to seek out the Yacumama and met with some success at the confluence of the Napo and Amazon rivers. Quoting from their report, The Warner Expedition March 2009 Expedition Report v 2.2. (28th July 2009) :Nueva Tanca 1997

"An incident took place in Nueva Tanca 1997...where many eye-witnesses reported seeing a large snake move from the jungle to the water up river from the Napo/Amazon confluence. Understanding that snakes have explosive energy, not sustained energy, Mike predicted that the snake would move down river and probably relocate at the next major confluence, the Napo/Amazon.

An associate and friend suggested Google EarthTM may provide some useful information so Mike suggested where to look. Upon examining the location on Google EarthTM they came across some interesting shapes...These shapes appeared to show a large snake in the area surrounded by watery channels and lagoons. At first the photographic evidence from the expedition suggested that this was a snake-shaped lagoon although on further examination in became clear that there are two snake-shaped lagoons at the Napo/Amazon. One was in the location found on Google Earth™ and another, closer to the Napo river, similar in dimensions but rotated 90 degrees and running parallel with the Napo river not perpendicular to it as is the other. Google Earth™ also showed many irregular channels leading from the confluence and terminating in the jungle. These channels seemed to match Colonel Percy Fawcett's report of 'large trails in the jungle' Further on in their report the authors state the following: "'Carries its water with it'

perpendicular to it as is the other.

Both the indigenous tribes of Africa and South America describe a snake that 'carries its water with it'.

This may have one or all of the following functions:

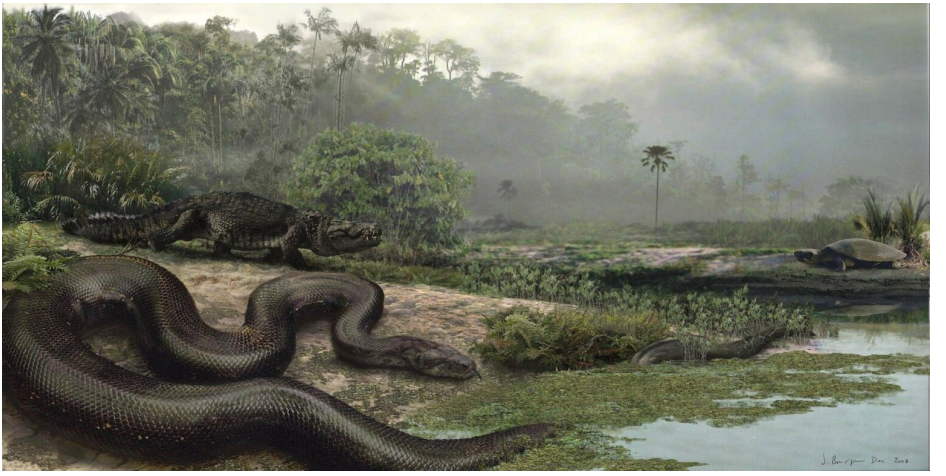
I. Stunning prey or dislodging them out trees (the Yacumama reportedly engorges water and shoots it at its prey like a water canon)

II. As it 'carries its water with it' it is possible that it may use this water pressure to support its skeletal structure as it moves through the jungle.

III. Mike's hypothesis is that it can also use water as an instrument for burrowing.

Conclusion:

Given the scientific principle of Occam's razor, the evidence provided in this report and the apparent absence of any other credible explanation, the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn and which represents the "simplest explanation that explains the most data" is that Mike & Greg Warner's Expedition conclusion to be drawn and which represents the "simplest explanation that explains the most data" is that Mike & Greg Warner's Expedition to the Peruvian Amazon did indeed prove the existence of a giant snake inhabiting the area of the Napo/Amazon confluence and provide photographic & video evidence to support this discovery." (5)



Yacumama as Titanboa see https://dinopedia.fandom.com/wiki/Titanoboa

Could the Yacumama be a surviving Titanboa? According to Wikipedia the Titanboa "is an extinct genus of very large snakes that lived in what is now La Guajira in northeastern Colombia. They could grow up to 12.8 m (42 ft), perhaps even 14.3 m (47 ft) long and reach a weight of 1,135 kg (2,500 lb). This snake lived during the Middle to Late Paleocene epoch, around 60 to 58 million years ago following the extinction of all non-avian dinosaurs. Although originally thought to be an apex predator, the discovery of skull bones revealed that it was more than likely specialized in preying on fish. The only known species is *Titanoboa cerrejonensis*, the largest snake ever discovered which supplanted the previous record holder, *Gigantophis garstini*..." (6)

Colombia is not far from Brazil where the Yacumama is thought to reside. According to the Ancient Origins web site, alluding to the explorer Percy Fawcett: "According to Fawcett and others in history who have claimed to see the Giant Anaconda, the massive prehistoric snake is over 40 feet (12 meters) long and at least a foot (30 cm) in diameter. To some, this giant snake is called Yacumama, meaning "mother of water." (7) Returning to Eagle Clan Arawak Monsters , the Brazilian-Columbian Boundary Commission reported a snake killed on the banks of the Rio Negro which measured 100 ft long. Another snake was killed by machine gun fire,this one measured 131 ft long and weighed 5 tons. British cryptozoologist Carl Marshall wrote about giant snakes in Flying Snake magazine volume 1 issue 3, May 2012. He quotes from Up de Graff, Head-hunters of the Amazon (1923) : " A snake of 60ft (18.2 metres)? I personally think a snake of this size is possible, yet improbable. There are even reports of anacondas of 150-200ft (approx. 60.9 metres) but these are reports from frightened natives and non-scientific observers and should not be accepted at face value without corroborating evidence…"(8) There is a story that the yacumama attacks its prey by squirting a jet of water at the prey from its mouth. It just so happens that the archerfish uses this method to kill its prey. Could the yacumama be a giant archerfish? This is unlikely as the distribution of the archer fish is from India,Bangladesh and Sri Lanka through Southeast Asia to northern Australia and Melanesia, not South America.

It is possible that the Yacumama is actually the Sucuriju Gigante? According to Cryptowiki this cryptid is :" said to be giant snake that controls the rivers it lives in. There are ancient tales that say it made the Amazon River. Since the discovery of the fossils of Gigantophis garstini, a large snake from the Priabonian age of the Eocene (about 30 million years ago) that could reach 33 feet (11 metres) in length, and the more recently discovered fossils of Titanoboa cerrejonensis (from about 50-60 million years ago) that reached 43 feet (14 metres), there has been some speculation it could actually exist and be an ancestor of the prehistoric creature. There have been supposed sightings of giant snakes in South

(from about 50-60 million years ago) that reached 43 feet (14 metres),there has been some speculation it could actually exist and be an ancestor of the prehistoric creature. There have been supposed sightings of giant snakes in South America for many years. In 1846, George Gardner wrote about his travels in Brazil. He said he saw a dead giant snake on the lands of a Senor Lagoeira which was thirty-three feet long…" (9)

Another possible cryptozoological candidate for the Yakumama is the Minhocao, although the Minhocao is more worm-like than snake-like. According to Carl Marshall writing in Flying Snake volume 2 issue 6, November 2013: " Minhocao. Ethnoknown from the Upper Paraguay in South America, the monstrous *minhocao* (sometimes spelled minocao) is thought to be an extremely large ,elongate subterranean creature, adorned with a pair of long cephalic appendages and an inconvenient habit of digging enormous trenches that the local populace believe is responsible for uprooting orchards and redirecting the courses of rivers...The *minhocao* is often considered by some authors to be an undescribed species of giant caecilian (Gymnophiona) ; a limbless subterranean amphibian that can attain a documented length of 1.5m (4ft 11 in). But could the *minhocao*, rather than being a giant gymnophionian, actually be a mega myriapod? Albeit a species who has taken a long and unique evolutionary path. (10)

As in previous cryptozoology studies by myself and Shane, we turn to George M.Eberhart`s Mysterious Creatures volume one A-M for further information.Concerning the Giant Anaconda: " *Physical description*: Length,40-105ft. Dark chestnut colour. Diameter, more than 2ft6in. Weight,up to 5 tons. Triangular head. Two horns above the eyes. Large eyes glow phosphorescent blue at night. Off-white spots on belly.

Behaviour: Semi-aquatic. A swift swimmer. Creates a huge wake.

Tracks: Wide furrow through the swamp, with trees pushed up.

Distribution: Amazon River basin, Brazil; less credible reports are from Argentina, Venezuela,and Guyana….

Possible explanations:

(1) Skins of normal-sized Anacondas (*Eunectes murinus*) are often dried and stretched, resulting in a much greater length. Even a skin that is not stretched can be 10-20 percent longer than the live snake.

(2) Field estimates are often unreliable, especially for snakes that are partially submerged.

(3) An unknown species of anaconda that normally attains such lengths.

(4) Reports of horns might be caused by protruding eyes, fleshy outgrowths caused by protruding eyes,fleshy outgrowths caused by an injury, or bar-like markings on the head. (11)

Shane adds: Regarding the Yacumama of the Iquitos region of Peru, let's clear up some confusion, which may help determine what manner of beastie the Yacumama is. 1. Famous explorer Colonel Percy Fawcett encountered a 62-foot anaconda on the Rio Abuna River, near the confluence with the Rio Negro, in the Amazon Basin, during his South American travels. As far as he could ascertain, 45 feet of the snake lay out of the river, on the riverbank, after harrowingly encountering the snake in the river and successively, fatally shooting the anaconda in the spine. Fawcett estimated that an additional 17 feet of the snake still lay in the water of the river, making a total length of 62 feet, total length, far exceeding the normal 20+ foot length normally attributed to the green anaconda. For a green anaconda (Eunectes murinus), was undoubtedly what this was, due to the illustration provided by Fawcett's son Brian Fawcett and showing the black blotches patterning of this species. Green anacondas have black blotches running along the side of the body and yellowish-orange stripes along the head. As a surveyor, Fawcett had the best possible experience to estimate the size and length of this snake. Being an out-sized green anaconda, this snake is a totally separate species from the Yacumama, which is reported mainly as black in colour, without any major skin

patterning reported and closer to 100-120 feet in length.
2. However, Fawcett encountered trails in the Amazonian swamps that he estimated were 6-feet wide. This is much closer to the Yacumama 's reported width of 6 feet. Fawcett was not that far away from Peru, the Yacumama's reputed haunts. *
3. * Exploration Fawcett, P. 108, 115-116.

Whatever the Yacumama is, it is certainly something special, given it's length of up to 120 feet and width of 6 feet. The core region it is reported from, near Iquitos,Peru is one of the last remote regions in the world that has not been corrupted by makind`s ceaseless deforestation, development, urban sprawl and utter contempt for other living things, including our own kind with kind, with petty wars/conflicts. Iquitos can only be reached by air or water, thus creating a temporary refuge. But for how long?

Luckily, there are far-sighted cryptozoologists that are seeking out the Yacumama as a real, flesh-and-blood cryptid, that is VERY deserving of habitat protection and thus ensuring habitat integrity and conservation for ALL the fauna and flora of this region of Peru.Is the name Yacumama, synonymous with Sachamama, Minhocao, Sucuriju Gigante and other names? Probably.
Sachamama is the terrestrial or forest-dwelling version of the Yacumama. It purportedly hibernates, or more correctly aestivates, during long periods, in the forest.
Snakes, being ectothermic or cold-blooded, can go long periods without food and are also known to aestivate during dry spells, coming out of their torpor when the rains return.
This is precisely what Sachamama is reported to do. Naturally, a titanic snake would head directly to water after a long dry period, seeking food and water. Water also buoys the snake's massive weight and girth.
Snakes can also grow throughout their lives, providing they have enough food, nutrition and habitat. This could help explain the tremendous sizes of the snakes reported throughout the Amazon Basin.
The only difference between the Sachamama and the Yacumama is, the Sachamama is sometimes reported to have a shell-like structure

on it's back. Forest debris, ground-clutter and rapid-calcification, could create a structure-like appearance on the back of some of these snakes, just coming out of their aestivation.
Sachamama is reported to have horns or horn-like structures on it's head region, just like the Yacumama.
This could be due to sexual-dimorphism, where the male of a given species may have horns, but, not necessarily the female. This feature is very common in nature.
There is also a snake with horns precedent, with the Rhinoceros Viper, of West Africa. It's head-gear features a very impressive set of horns.
So, most all of the zoological features of Yacumama are very natural and sensible, including size, anatomical features, ecological habitat and behaviour.
Could the Yacumama be a giant caecilian? Absolutely! This theory, championed by the great Dr. Karl Shuker is one of the very best theories to account for Yacumama and the Minhocao. Read more about Minhocao and giant snakes is his top-drawer books.
The Minhocao has been reported mainly from southern Brazil, but, also as far afield as Nicaragua.
What could Yacumama be? It most probably is a super-sized, black snake of some kind.
It could be a new species or sub-species of anaconda, that normally grows prodigiously, if left in an undisturbed environment.
Titanoboa cerrejonensis, or an even larger undiscovered relative, is probably the explanation that makes the most sense, ecologically speaking.
Titanoboa was recently discovered in 2009, in a 58-60 million year old Paleocene Epoch habitat, during a Columbian coal mine excavation, by scientists. Titanoboa's fossils indicate that it lived in a swampy-riverine habitat like the Mississippi River Delta or Florida in the United States. It grew to at least 42-50 feet long and maybe even longer. It is theorised, that it was an ambush predator, much like a crocodile.
It is currently the largest snake ever discovered.

- In relation to the Yacumama, Titanoboa is currently depicted as a gigantic, dark-coloured snake. It lived in an environment much like the Iquitos-region of Peru and it's size and length are comparable to many Yacumama or Sucuriju Gigante reports. It also lived in nearby Columbia, not too very far away from Peru, where the Yacumama is now reported.

- If the Yacumama is a surviving Titanoboa, how could it have survived without detection until modern times. Well, certainly the local people in northern Peru and the entire Amazon Basin know of it's presence. More specifically, the Yacumama's fossorial (underground) habits, burrowing and aestivation underground would help it avoid detection. A fossorial lifestyle would also explain the periodic sightings of Yacumama. The underground world, including caves, is a new frontier for the possibility of new species, much like the the deep ocean.

1. Secondly, the wet, damp, humid conditions around Iquitos, Peru and the Amazon Basin, would not be very conducive to the preservation of any post-Paleocene fossils of Titanoboa. It actually takes very special conditions to preserve fossils. Yet, there may be some, somewhere, to be found.

Other Yacumama-like reports have been logged from other nations.

In 1969, a long, black, serpentine animal with 2 horns, was reported from Lago Catemaco, Mexico.

In the region of Jinotega, Nicaragua, there are legends of a very large, armoured, snake-like, burrowing beast, similar to the Yacumama and called Sierpe (serpent or snake). Physical damage and environmental changes, similar to the Yacumama and Minhocao, were reported there on 10 March 1866. Environmental, physical evidence of 2 beasts was discovered. The reported armour of the Minhocao and these Minhocao-like beasts could be due to the hardened scales of a gigantic snake. This information from Mexico and Nicaragua may indicate that the Yacumama and Titanboa were and are more widespread than previously thought. Could ground-penetrating radar help detect a Sachamama/Yacumama? If so, and it starts to awaken due to the radar beams, one may want to run (forget about your Yacumama selfie)-run like your hair is on fire, because,Yacumama may eat more than just monkeys! I concur with Richard,that the discovery of a living Titanboa, would certainly be the discovery of a lifetime and it would unequivocally demonstrate that we have much to learn

about the world in which we live. Whatever the Yacumama was or is, finding it would certainly prove one of the most exciting animal discoveries of the century, if not the millennium.

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A BRACE OF BIZARRE BORDS BIRDS

Richard George

In August 1970, in the village of Tongham, Surrey, a bird was bemusing the locals.

"One man said, 'It looked like something between a peacock and a turkey. It had dark wings on the outside, but when it flew away, it had white centres to them. It made a noise very much like a duck when flying...' " (1) Not long before this, an aviary in the area had lost two African Crowned Cranes. This was probably a red herring (or should I say Red Grouse ?), since, as the Bords point out, a turkey, one half of the comparison, is a lot bulkier and squatter than a crane !

My money would be on a Great Bustard. The body shape is plausible, and the wing colouration is a good match: Heinzel-Fitter-Parslow (who belong in Bohemian Rhapsody, with that rhythm) comment "Striking amount of white in wing in eagle-like flight" (2).

The only slight problem is the call: a "bark" (3) or "nasal grunt" (4). Could this sound like a duck ? I suppose it could. After its original extinction as a breeding bird in the 1830s, the Great Bustard was a very rare vagrant in Britain. Interestingly, there were two official records in January 1970, one in Kent, not that far from Surrey, and the other on Fair Isle (5). 1970 was a good British bustard year, in fact: it was when the Great Bustard Trust was established. Anthony Lewis wrote a piece about this in the New York Times (6).

Remaining State-side, on the very next page of Alien Animals is a most intriguing case (7). On New Year's Day 1976, in Harlingen, Texas, two children aged 14 and 11 saw a "horrible-looking" bird. With the aid of

With the aid of binoculars, they described it as black, more than five feet tall, with a six-inch beak, dark red eyes, a grey face “like a gorilla”, and wings bunched up at the shoulders. Prints were found eight inches across and one and a half inches deep

In the same state of the union a week later, in Brownsville, a man encountered a flying creature sharing some characteristics with the horror of Harlingen – red eyes and bunched or folded up wings. It made a frightening “Eeee” noise, which the children had also reported. These two sightings led to a “flap” of monster birds or bats, of varying plausibility. The detail that stands out for me is “grey face like a gorilla”, and the bird I have in mind is the Harpy Eagle. This has a population in Central America, not a million miles from Texas. Click Google Image, and you may see what I mean about the grey face:

“Harpy Eagles have flat, wide faces that are somewhat humanoid from a distance. They’ve even been described as looking like ‘a human in a bird costume’, and are potentially responsible for a number of cryptid sightings...”(8)

Bingo ! But does the Harpy Eagle tally with the other particulars ?

It stands at its highest (females are larger) 35-41 inches tall, not five feet, though it is easy to overestimate size. Its huge talons can exert 50 kilograms of pressure: might this explain the depth of the prints ?

It vocalises “Weee” and “Weee-ooo” - a close enough match. Its plumage is not uniformly dark, but a mixture of black, grey and white. The main discrepancy is with eye colour. But could there have been red eye-shine ? At Brownsville it was dark: I don’t know what the light conditions were in Harlingen.

So Harpy Eagle is not a sure-fire identification, but it’s certainly, to my mind,the best contender in the bird book.

While investigating Harpy Eagles, I found a personal account by John Broussard. In 1972, aged 13, he saw one in his grandmother's garden, deep in the bayou country of Louisiana (9). At first he thought it was "an extinct bird from the dinosaur age". When it blinked, its eyes changed colour – an interesting detail as I've been discussing Harpy Eagles' eyes. Assuming this is reliable, it's fascinating. Were the Harlingen and Brownsville cryptids, the pterodactyl reports the same year also from Texas ("extinct bird from the dinosaur age") and Broussard's own earlier sighting, all Harpy Eagles ? Is the story here not paranormal, but ornithological – that the Harpy that the Harpy Eagle, unrecognised by science, inhabits not just South and Central America, but the southernmost states of the US ?

Chasin' down a hoodoo there…

Born on the bayou…

Born on the bayou…

Creedence Clearwater Revival

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Jumping Snakes

Ulrich Magin

Flying snakes are strange but then there are jumping snakes which are almost flying …The question whether snakes can jump, and for long distances, has often been asked (and one of the names of the Alpine monster lizard tatzelwurm is even springwurm, or jumping snake).

In 1976, the German animal magazine "Das Tier" asked readers to write in if they had ever observed a jumping snake. Four readers sent letters and the all-knowing editorial staff explained why each of these observations was mistaken. I summarise the reports and add in brackets what the editor thought of them. 1) Dachau, Bavaria, Germany. Mr and Mrs The Ilg were near a motorway exit when "a black and white coloured snake about one and a half meters long snaked its way through an intersection. A truck approached quickly and noisily from the right. The snake reared up vertically and jumped across the street in large arcs." (Das Tier 7/1976, an eel?) 2) In Ticino, Switzerland. Walther Pappritz sees an Aesculapian snake in front of his holiday chalet. "The snake passed me. I followed it to a garden wall on higher terrain. After about 15 m it seemed to notice me and fled with a real jump, sideways backwards, about twice the length of its body." (Das Tier 11/1976, mock attack and snake started to slide)3), Berchtesgaden, Bavaria, Germany. The Gollers were on a narrow path in the mountains. "When we rounded the corner of a rock, a large black snake lay in front of us and jumped at least a meter high sideways into the bushes. The snake was about three feet long." (Das Tier 11/1976, snake had climbed a bush at lightning speed.) 4) Krems, Lower Austria, Austria. Ms. Gregari wrote: "A shiny silvery snake about one meter long was lying on the road. As I approached it in the car, it jumped toward the middle of the the street in undulating leaps, as if the sun-drenched asphalt had become too hot for it." (*Das Tier* 11/1976, snake simply moved quickly.) There is a tendency to negate that snakes jump in the editor's explanations, and the eel ones seems particularly unfit. However, the magazine Das Tier was not the first to attempt to find out if snakes can jump. I found the following in the New Zealand *Waipa Post* on 14 March 1931, page 3:

Waipa Post on 14 March 1931, page 3:

‘DO SNAKES JUMP?
OLD CONTROVERSY REVIVED.
This is the season for snakes, writes Mr C. R Jackson in the Melbourne Argus. Their habits are discussed wherever they are met. One of the oldest controversies concerns whether or not snakes jump. I contend that they can and do jump. In support of my contention I recount three experiences.
I once saw a copperhead coiled on the stump of a large tree, watching a bird about the size of a sparrow which was flitting about a bush 4ft. or so distant. Suddenly the snake launched itself horizontally at the bird. Its head was raised slightly and drawn back as it struck. Had the bird kept its direction it would have been caught, but at the last moment it turned away, so that the snake missed, although it must have touched the body feathers behind the wing. The snake fell to the ground, striking the earth full length with a graceful “wollop.” It did not, however, seem to be in the least distressed by the fall. The snake measured 3ft. 2in. In its strike the head of the snake covered 4ft. 2in., and the tail covered 1Ift. I think that the snake did its utmost in this effort.
When I was riding through the Moe swamp one very hot day I was struck at by a snake which I estimated to be 3ft. 6in. in length. Its girth was very great. It was the thickest I have seen in a long experience in the bush. I believe also that the snake was the most beautiful I have seen. Apparently it had very recently cast its skin, for it showed every scale distinctly on its back and upper sides, which were a brilliant black except where the sunlight caught the scales and made them appear silvery-grey. The belly was a georgeous [sic] vermillion, which extended farther up the sides than is usual with this species.
As it struck the snake seemed to rear up half its length and then to launch itself diagonally at my heel. It would have struck my heel only I pressed my foot against the side of the horse. Before the snake fell its tail was 6in. off the ground and 18in. from where it “took off” – a really fine performance for such a fat old warrior. My foot was not quite 3ft. from the ground. I estimated that the distance covered from

the “take off” to where the snake fell was 5ft. 6in., when measured by the head, and 18in. when measured by the tail. The height from the ground reached by the head was 2ft 9in. or 10in., and by the tail 6in. This fellow landed just as ungracefully as the other snake, and had better luck, for it escaped.
Although I have had snakes “come at me” in various ways, the only other clear attempt at a jump I have experienced was that made by a brown snake 4ft. 8in. long. It was moving away from me along a wire fence. When I was about 6ft. behind it and was preparing to strike it with a long-handled shovel, the snake suddenly shot back at me straight over its tail. Although I sprang back as quickly as I could the snake almost hit my left knee. When it sprang its tail was just opposite a post, and there was a mark where the head landed, which was an inch or two more than 7ft. from where its tail was at the “take off.” The head travelled 11ft. 8in. or 10in., and the tail only 2ft. 6in. In making its strike the snake’s head seemed gradually to rise as it doubled back until it nearly reached my knee. I do not believe that the tail left the ground, but I am not sure because I was too closely engaged with its head.’

Certainly, more examples of jumping snakes can be found.

Ulrich Magin
Native New Zealand Snakes?

'New Zealand is one of the only completely snake-free countries in the world. This is because snakes never evolved in New Zealand, and no snakes ever made their way across the ocean to make the islands their home.' That is what we read on homepages like https://a-z-animals.com/blog/snakes-in-new-zealand/ and it is what almost everybody knows: there are no native snakes in Ireland and in New Zealand.
However, some search in New Zealand newspapers offers a different scenario: snakes have been found, and the existence of native New Zealand snakes has been discussed since the Europeans landed on the islands. Some cases appear to be genuine, but these refer to sea snakes. The number of snake finds increases the closer we come our own times – a fact which hints at snakes that were introduced by shipping or which have escaped private pet owners.
We start with the earlies snake article I have found, and which already asks the relevant question: Are there New Zealand serpents?

'NEW ZEALAND SERPENT.
Could any of your readers give me any information as to the name and habits of an animal of the serpent tribe, of which I met with a specimen some years ago in New Zealand? The serpent in question was taken in the sea, off the settlement of Kororarika, in the Bay of Islands. When first seen it was coiled on a floating mass of sea-weed, which had been driven into the bay after several days of unusually severe N. E. gales. A native happening to pass close by in his canoe, the serpent darted into it, the Maorie as quickly darting out, and swimming ashore. His story being told, the whaleboat belonging to the pilot of the station put out, and the crew disabled the animal (which showed fight well) with their stretchers, and brought it to land, where I saw it, much hurt but still alive. Its length was 8 feet 9 inches, and in shape precisely like a common snake, the tail tapering to a point; the thickness did not exceed that of the arm of a man of very moderate muscle, the head flattish and rather pointed; teeth long and sharp; colour, over. From a little behind the head, and nearly all along the back, was one long fin, which lay flat or was elevated, like a perch's, at will. This was certainly an unusual visitor to the coast of New Zealand. I spent some years in sea-fishing there, and never saw another speci-

silvery all over. From a little behind the head, and nearly all along the back, was one long fin, which lay flat or was elevated, like a perch's, at will. This was certainly an unusual visitor to the coast of New Zealand. I spent some years in sea-fishing there, and never saw another specimen; and the Maories (a most intelligent race in all matters of natural history) all declared that the creature was quite unknown to them. I wished at the time to have had it preserved, but regret to say that the person who was to have done it neglected it until too late. — MAORIE in *Field*.' (*Daily Southern Cross*, 15 July 1862, p. 4)This sound more fish than snake. The next find was of a real snake, and was widely reported in the press at the time. It was first noted in the *New Zealand Herald*, 11 January 1869, p. 3:
'New Zealand Snake. – There has been a snake found in the Upper Waikato – the first of this order of reptilia jet found in New Zealand. The interesting specimen has been deposited in the Museum, where it can be seen by the curious.'

The report met with great interest, and all the major newspapers carried it but it then vanished without further trace. (*New Zealand Herald*, 16 January 1869, p. 6; *Nelson Evening Mail*, 19 January 1869; *Colonist*, 19 January 1869; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 20 January 1869; *Otago Daily Times*, 20 January 1869; *Hawke's Bay Times*, 21 January 1869, p. 3; *Otago Witness*, 23 January 1869; *Westport Times*, 23 January 1869; *Southland Times*, 25 January 1869; *West Coast Times*, 25 January 1869; *Grey River Argus*, 26 January 1869)
Literally dozens of press articles also dealt with another find, at Auckland. We read in the *Evening Post*, 6 January 1886, p. 2:

'An Unwelcome Visitor. A SNAKE AT AUCKLAND.
[By Telegraph.]
[United Press Association.]
Auckland, 5th January.
A remarkable discovery has been made at the Ellerslie racecourse by Mr. Blair, a cordial manufacturer, who was engaged in collecting lemonade bottles from the booths. While in a passage leading to the ladies' room, he was astounded to see a carpet snake, three feet long, scuttling along the concrete. It is probable that the stranger arrived in the colony in a case with Australian wine. A largo number of cases of that beverage were opened at the grand stand during the recent meeting.'

scuttling along the concrete. It is probable that the stranger arrived in the colony in a case with Australian wine. A largo number of cases of that beverage were opened at the grand stand during the recent meeting.'
The New Zealand *Thames Star* adds, on the same day, on page 2:

'A carpet snake, found at Ellerslie, is being exhibited at the Herald office, and is exciting curiosity. It is supposed to have come in a case of Australian wine. The finder is liable, under the Animals' Protection Act, to a fine of £100 for having it in his possession.'

This initial report was carried by too many papers to list them here, but there was a kind of concluding account two weeks alter in the *West Coast Times*, on 18 February 1886 on page 4:
'THE AUCKLAND SNAKE.The capturer of the snake at the Ellerslie Grandstand, Mr Blair, the cordial manufacturer, has had some little trouble over his prize. The police authorities were yesterday looking him up with a view of taking action for having a noxious reptile in his possession, contrary to the Act therein provided. He, on his part, had been looking vainly for the police authorities, so that it seemed a game of cross-purposes. It appears the fame of the snake had reached Wellington, and the Government were anxious to know what was being done with it. Mr Blair had two offers for the snake, one from an enterprising speculator who wanted to run the snake as a side show, and offered a £5 note for the loan of it for a night. On the other hand, Professor Thomas offered to take charge of he snake dead or alive, for scientific purposes. The guardian of the snake elected to give it to to [sic] the professor, in case the snake cleared out of the show and he got into trouble over it. Accordinly [sic] the snake was handed over to Professor Thomas yesterday, in a glass case, who chloroformed in the presence of Superintendent Thomson and Mr Blair. It died in a few minutes, and will be preserved as a specimen in the Museum connected with the University. It will be a great relief to many people to know that the reptile is at last dead.'

In 1900, reports again questioned whether there were snakes on the island. This time, they came from Britain, and were commented upon in the local press.

'SNAKES IN NEW ZEALAND. Snake stories are at a heavy discount

in the local press.

'SNAKES IN NEW ZEALAND. Snake stories are at a heavy discount nowadays, but the following extract from a London paper, styled "The Mirror of Life," is so highly stamped with the band of truth, that it well deserves repetition. "In New Zealand," says the very veracious newspaper, "the snakes which infect the country are harmless …. Cats, as snake-killers, have earned a reputation, and at Wellington, New Zealand, a man who had four of these animals, trained them to kill the reptiles, which, in spite of their twisting and turning, the cats would carry in their mouths or bring their writhing bodies to their master." Not content with this vivid word-picture, "The Mirror" provides an illustration showing four enormous cats, that would well pass muster as panthers, each with a wriggling serpent in its mouth. We have heard it said that life is one long lie. Perhaps this explains the reflection given in "The Mirror of Life." It certainly is a remarkable untruth, and the circumstantial detail which adorns the tale must be somewhat bewildering to a veracious community such as Christchurch, for instance. Fortunately the class of persons which "The Mirror" appears to cater for would not be a very desirable to the colony, and if the remarkable inventions of its editor keep its leaders from invading our shores, be should receive our very hearty thanks.' (*Press*, Canterbury, 18 September 1900, p. 4) In the monster year of 1933, when Nessie appeared, monsters were observed all, over the globe. In New Zealand, at New Plymouth in Taranaki region on the North Island, a (possibly Australian) snake was discovered:

'Snake Found in Taranaki.
While walking along the Bell Block beach, near New Plymouth, the other day, Mr W. Annear was surprised to see a live snake on the sand. When he approached, the snake reared up, and Mr Annear, taking great care, secured it with a noose of flax. He placed it in fresh water, but subsequently found it dead. The snake has now been identified by Mr W. W. Smith, naturalist, as a native of Australia, known as the golden band water snake, and very poisonous. Mr Smith says it is eight or nine years since a snake of this species was found on the coast, and that the one caught by Mr Annear is the finest specimen he has seen.' (*Star* (Christchurch), 28 March 1933, p. 6)

Two finds of sea snakes then followed. In two accounts in the same

has seen.' (*Star* (Christchurch), 28 March 1933, p. 6)

Two finds of sea snakes then followed. In two accounts in the same column, the Canterbury *Press* wrote on 24 May 1938 on page 11:

'MAORI CAPTURES A SNAKE
DISCOVERY NEAR WAIROA
BODY SENT TO MUSEUM FOR IDENTIFICATION
(PRESS ASSOCIATION TELEGRAM.
WAIROA. May 23. A live snake, measuring 30 inches in length and four inches in circumference, was found near Taole Cape, on the northern extremity of Mahia Peninsula, on Thursday last.
The snake was discovered by two children and was captured by a Maori, Teihi Peka, who succeeded in throwing a loop over its head. The snake was found some distance from, the sea. Whether or not it is of a dangerous variety is unknown in Wairoa, but some people are inclined to think that it is a variety of water snake which got out of its latitude.
On being killed, it was forwarded to the editor of the "Wairoa Star," who sent it to the Director of the Dominion Museum for identification.

SPECIMEN LIKELY TO BE SEA SNAKE
CAPTURE AT EAST CAPE FIFTY YEARS AGO
[THE PRESS Special Service.]WELLINGTON, May 23. Mr W. J. Phillips, Acting-Director of the Dominion Museum, said this evening that he had not then received the snake and consequently had no idea what it would be.
"There are many cases, however, of snakes being found in New Zealand, although there are none indigenous to the Dominion," he said. "In most instances where land snakes have been found their origin has been quite definite – they were tropical snakes that have been landed from ships with cases of tropical produce and have been killed before they left wharves, or escaped from a circus or menagerie.
"Stringent precautions, which have so far proved effective, have been taken to prevent the importation of snakes by accident or design. Even for zoological purposes they are refused admittance. Two years ago a traveller from Panama brought a large boa-constrictor, which, when refused permission to land it, he offered to the Wellington Zoo. As even then no permission could be obtained to land the snake, it

ago a traveller from Panama brought a large boa-constrictor, which, when refused permission to land it, he offered to the Wellington Zoo. As even then no permission could be obtained to land the snake, it was killed on board the ship.
"Sea snakes, on the other hand, cannot so easily be kept out, as if they can traverse the intervening miles of ocean they cannot be prevented from landing on some lonely beach," he added. "A ringed sea snake of Fiji has several times been found in New Zealand, current-borne from the tropical seas of the north. This snake is amphibious, haunting the shore, and is marked with alternate bands of black and ivory, the back being of a darker hue than the under-surface. This snake is deadly poisonous, although being slow to anger. It is handled freely even by children in the islands, where it is exceedingly common. It is usually small, but specimens up to five feet long and as thick as a man's forearm have been taken. A specimen of this snake was caught alive at East Cape in 1889. Numerous cases of dead ones have been recorded. Sir George Grey presented one to the British Museum as having been caught in New Zealand.
"Even commoner in New Zealand is the yellow-bellied sea snake, of which at least a dozen occurrences have been recorded. This snake is also poisonous. It is black and yellow in colour, and is flattened in form. It is a powerful swimmer.
"The view taken by the Wairoa people, that the snake is a species of water snake which has been carried out of its latitude, certainly seems a probable one."

This story was a sensation in the country, and again many newspapers carried versions of the account, for example the *Patea Mail*, 27 May 1938, p. 4; *Otago Daily Times*, 24 May 1938, p. 5; *Auckland Star*, 24 June 1938, p. 9)

Then came "ANOTHER SEA SNAKE", as the *Thames Star* had it on 15 June 1938 on page 3:'WASHED UP ON BEACH.
THREE FEET IN LENGTH.
NORTH AUCKLAND DISCOVERY.
[By Telegraph.—Press Association].
DARGAVILLE, June 14. Washed up by the tide at Bailey's Beach on Sunday, a live water snake, 3ft in length, was discovered by Mr. Cumming, of Rehutai. He immediately killed the snake, which he has pro served to enable information to be secured from the Auckland Muse-

Sunday, a live water snake, 3ft in length, was discovered by Mr. Cumming, of Rehutai. He immediately killed the snake, which he has pro served to enable information to be secured from the Auckland Museum.
The snake has a black back with a yellow belly, and has yellow stripes turning to circles at the tail. The snake is covered on the body with ringed scales.'

The report, clearly describing a sea snake, can also be found in the *Northern Advocate*, 14 June 1938, p. 10, and in the *New Zealand Herald*, 17 June 1938.

We are closing in on our own times which several stories about snakes being caught in land environment. We read in the Canterbury *Press*, 23 July 1964, p. 1:

'Snake Found In Bushes In Suburb Of Auckland
(New Zealand Press Association)
AUCKLAND, July 22.
A dead snake 2ft 7in long was brought into the "New Zealand Herald" office tonight. It had been found in some bushes at Titirangi.
A senior lecturer in zoology at Auckland University, Miss J. Robb, who dissected the snake tonight, said it was almost certainly not a sea snake, was non-venomous, an almost mature female and had been about to shed its skin when it died.
"There is not a specimen of the snake in the university museum similar to this one," said Miss Robb.
"There isn't much variety of snake specimens available in the country to provide a background for comparison."
This made the process of identification more difficult.
A land snake could have reached the estuary area by "rafting" from Australia or the islands, although this was an unusually long distance for snakes to travel in this fashion.
"About 300 miles is about the maximum distance that one would expect a snake to raft out of tropical waters," Miss Robb said.
Alternatively a snake could be jettisoned accidentally from a ship arriving from tropical regions.

One of the main difficulties in identifying the Titirangi snake was not knowing where it had come from. Miss Robb said the snake must have been reasonably fresh when it was put into the jar of methylated spirits. Whether the snake was a type capable of surviving New Zealand conditions was not known, but it was in a very healthy condition when it died. There was no way of telling immediately how the snake had died and there were innumerable possible explanations for its death. The snake was found 300 yards from a tidal creek, known as Little Muddy Creek, in some bushes on the property of Mr J. R. McPherson, Grendon road, Titirangi, by his two sons, Craig, aged 13, and Gregor, aged nine, and their one-year-old Alsatian. The creek flows from the Manukau at Laingholm. One-inch thick in the middle, the snake has a diamond-shaped python-like head with blue-grey scales, interspersed with dark green ones on its back. Underneath it is covered with dark green scales tinged with a cream-and-yellow colouring. Craig McPherson said tonight that he and his brother saw their dog sniffing in the bush. They went to investigate and found the dead snake. They told their father of the find and he put it in a bottle with methylated spirits to preserve it. "We kept the snake under the house for quite a while," said Craig. "We showed it to our schoolfriends. People would not believe that we had a snake until we showed them."'

One year later, another snake turned up at Dunedin. The Press said on 4 October 1965, page 3: 'Girls Find Dead Snake (N.Z Press Association)

DUNEDIN, October 3. Two small girls found a dead snake yesterday in an empty section in Elm row where they were playing. The snake was three feet long with dark brown and yellow markings. The two girls, Lynette and Susan Davis, aged eight and five respectively, told their mother about the snake. She said later the snake had a head

about the size of a penny and it narrowed down to a flattened tail. The director of the Otago Museum (Dr. R. R. Forster) said the snake looked as if it had been preserved for some years. It has not yet been identified.'

The next discovery – and again of a sea snake – happened three years later. The source is again the Press, this time the edition of 6 April 1968, p. 38:
'Snake On Beach
(N.Z. Press Association)
PAEROA, April 5. What is thought to be a venomous sea snake was found alive on Waihi Beach on Wednesday afternoon by a resident. The almost black snake was among seaweed which had been washed ashore by a storm.
There are only two known types of sea snake to reach New Zealand. The one found on Waihi beach has been identified as the yellow-bellied sea snake known as the *Pelamis platurus*. It was approximately 36 inches long and as thick as a garden hose. It has two yellow stripes the length of its body, with a zig-zag effect near its tall. Waihi Beach is probably the farthest south a sea snake has been found as they frequent the warmer northern waters. The snake was taken to Waihi School and preserved.'

Finally, we reach 1972 and the last New Zealand snake story I have found. The *Press* had, on 2 December 1972, p. 1:

'Snake found in road tunnel
"Snakes alive!" exclaimed a cleaner in the Christchurch Lyttelton road tunnel at 5.15 a.m. yesterday. Lying on the tunnel roadway was a snake – a small one.
The cleaners approached it gingerly – it was either hibernating, ill, or dead.
They took the snake on a shovel to the toll plaza. The Lyttelton port agricultural officer was informed as soon as he arrived at work.
"I thought it was a lizard when they showed it to me," said the tunnel supervisor (Mr J. Storey). "It was about 8in long, and not a kick in it when I saw it. On close examination, it looked like a snake all right.
"We have found some peculiar things in the tunnel since it was opened in 1964, but this is the first – and last, I hope – snake," Mr Storey said.

“We have found some peculiar things in the tunnel since it was opened in 1964, but this is the first – and last, I hope – snake,” Mr Storey said.
The snake was examined with curiosity by agricultural officers at Lyttelton. They thought it a species of grass snake. It was taken away by a “head office” man from Wellington, and will be identified by scientists at Levin.
“It is possible that the snake is from Ecuador – a ship discharged bananas from there at Lyttelton on Thursday,” said an agricultural officer.
“The holds were gas-fumigated before the ship left Ecuador. The dead snake possibly fell from a banana crate being trucked through the tunnel to Christchurch.
“There will be no snake hunt,” he said. “It is the first snake I have heard of at Lyttelton.”’
Many other snake stories are certainly buried in the files, but this seems to be a fair average of these stories. The indication that there is an undiscovered New Zealand snake appears dim to me, but the stories about sea snakes may well be of some zoological interest.

Ulrich Magin
The freshwater octopus

"Flying Snake" had an assortment of freshwater octopuses in number 24. Here are some additional cases, in in some cases, only additional sources. Only the first section does contain actual catches of real animals, the rest refers to legends and hoaxes about giant squid or octopuses in lakes, rivers and swamps.
We go from facts to tales to hoaxes …

Octopus finds
All of my actual finds of octopuses in lakes come from the United States, and some have already been mentioned. I recall that one press report explained these out-of-place animals as bait sold to fishermen and then thrown into the lakes but can't judge on the value of this explanation.

Charles Fort, in *Lo!,* has the octopus from Lake Onondaga.

Doubt 16, p. 242
MORE DETAILS NEEDED
Ted Peters, *ae* 15, says he lassoed a live octopus in Blackwater River, near Morgantown, W. Va. Prof. L. H. Taylor, U of W. Va., says it isn't possible. Other boys claimed to have shot the critters in the same fresh waters. The story as AP tells it, 1-14-46, wants several details to raise it above a space-filler. For Fortean purposes – the allegation is that live Octopi have been found in "turbulent" fresh water. Cr Bonavia, Crehore, and others.

Doubt 41, p. 341:
An Octopus in a creek near Grafton, W. Va. Found by four nameless boys who gave it to the dog-catcher, logically. "Two-foot long tentacles" It died shortly. *Pittsburgh Press*, credit Maitland. [1954?]

An octopus caught in Lake Conway, Arkansas, on 1 December 2003 can be found in *Fortean Times* 184, p. 12, another freshwater octopus found in Oklahoma in *Fortean Times* 311, 2014, p. 23.

In 2017, an octopus was found, again in Oklahoma: "Officials confirm someone found an octopus in Grand Lake. The find came Sunday [6

In 2017, an octopus was found, again in Oklahoma: "Officials confirm someone found an octopus in Grand Lake. The find came Sunday [6 August 2017] on the heels of area storms that left extensive damage. […] Many have heard of a mysterious octopus lurking in Oklahoma lakes, but few can claim to have actually seen such a creature in area waters. Officials confirmed Wednesday that a local lake-goer, however, found an octopus in Oklahoma's Grand Lake. Sunday, as much of Green Country cleaned up from storm damage, lake officials opened an investigation of their own after they received a call concerning the eight-legged sea creature in Mayes County. According to the Grand River Dam Authority, though, the octopus was part of a seafood buffet at the nearby Yacht Club. Someone reportedly threw it into the water as part of a joke, where the lake-goer later spotted it." (http://www.fox23.com/news/green-country-lake-goer-finds-octopus-in-grand-lake/586648296 – 9 August 2017)

Octopus tales and encounters

Many are the sightings or alleged sightings of octopus-like creatures in lakes and rivers. As "the ones that got away", these animals are uncatchable and the entries in this section often refer to large creatures or "monsters". I sort them according to their respective country.

Austria

According to legend, the Traunsee (Lake Traun) near Salzburg in Austria is bottomless, and huge snakes live in it – as well as a mermaid riding a dragon (she has actually been sighted quite often in days gone by), and a giant octopus. 'Looking down one understands,' writes Heinrich Noë in his *Das Österreichisches Seenbuch* (Munich 1867, pp. 137–142), 'how the imagination of the mountain dwellers can imagine the gorges […] animated with horrible monsters. The Alpine lakes, too, have their "octopuses", monsters which, in folk legends, are not always content with the shape of an unusually large fish, but rather take on the girth and forms of hideous polypeds and other half-possible, half-impossible animal apparitions. In reality, however, a diver will encounter no more irregularities down there than a large catfish or salmon, a human corpse unable to rise in the tightly packed strata of water, whose coldness also prevents the development of those putrefactive gases that tend to thrive in warmer or shallower waters and lift up a bloated body, a sunken log, remains of barges and skeletons in the green, cold night." (quoted from: http://

those putrefactive gases that tend to thrive in warmer or shallower waters and lift up a bloated body, a sunken log, remains of barges and skeletons in the green, cold night." (quoted from: http://www.sagen.at/doku/seenbuch/traunsee.html)

Italy

Lago Delio or Lago D'Elio is a small lake high above the north-eastern banks of Lake Maggiore. In January 1961, some people skiing close to the lake saw "a mysterious animal with tentacles, resembling an octopus, coming out of the water at 3:30 p.m.". (Un mostro con tentacoli "visto" in un lago alpino. *La Stampa*, January 24, 1961) ***Poland***

The Kraken is also called Krabben in the old stories, and krabben is just the Norse word for crab. Perhaps most readers have seen the giant lobster holding a victim in its claws as depicted by Olaus Magnus on his map of Scandinavia, this is actually a kraken (the only image we have of it).

When Silesia was still German territory, a giant crab was spotted in the Enzigsee near Nörenberg in Pomerania (modern Jezioro Ińskonear Ińsko in Poland) and well known as the "big crab of Lake Enzig". The story is still around today, as there is a modern monument dedicated to the giant crab in Ińsko.

We read in a folktale: 'But the people of Nörenberg suffered great damage from a crab in the olden days. When they looked at their church tower, they thought it was getting lower every day. There arose a great astonishment in the city. But the disaster became even greater when one morning they found that a whole piece of the city wall had been removed, and no one knew how that could have been accomplished; for neither stone nor mortar was found lying near the gap. Then the councillors of the respectable town of Nörenberg conferred and thought that only an enemy could have caused this damage. So they told their night watchman to keep their eyes open for the next few nights and to sound the alarm if the enemy was really coming.

The night watchman was an intrepid man and had bravely chased away many phantoms of the night. But what he saw the next night made all the hairs on his spine stand up, because it came crawling up from Lake Enzig, much bigger than an elephant, a crab-monster like no one had ever seen before. With its armoured feet, thicker than a crocodile, he crawled over the city wall towards the church tower and began to chew comfortably on the tower, and thick stones and bricks

no one had ever seen before. With its armoured feet, thicker than a crocodile, he crawled over the city wall towards the church tower and began to chew comfortably on the tower, and thick stones and bricks cracked under its claws as one cracks nuts, and then disappeared into its giant mouth. This lasted about an hour, and then the giant crab crawled back to its lair in the nearby lake, its stalked eyes glittering mockingly in the moonlight.

When the night watchman reported this evil tale to the mayor, he held a difficult council with his councillors for a whole day. Unfortunately, it was all too clear to them that sword and axe were of no use against such a monster in its armour, and some even thought that one should leave the city with bag and baggage before the monster had devoured everything. But they wanted to make at least one attempt to catch the monster. So they told the blacksmith to forge the thickest iron chain, and when night fell again, all the able-bodied citizens stood at the gap in the wall and watched for the crab's return. Then it really came, creeping up like a moving mountain, so that even the bravest felt their heart sink into their pants. But the mayor shouted, "Forward, men." Then the three strongest men of the city pushed an iron rod towards the crab, which it bit into with his giant claws so that sparks flew out, and it held on to it too tightly, as if it were chained to it. But then all the Nörenbergers jumped in and dragged the crab by the pole to the forge, where the blacksmith was just having the last chain link glow. He threw it around one of its legs so that it sizzled and spattered, and forged it shut. At the other end of the chain a heavy ship's anchor had been attached, which they then drove out onto the Enzigsee in barges and dragged the crab behind them. Now it is held by an anchor and can no longer harm the town of Nörenberg.

It all happened so long ago that no one really knows if it is true, but the Nörenbergers have never quite gotten rid of their fear that the iron chain may rust through one day and then the big carb could come out and destroy their whole town to the last stone.' (http://www.horst-kaiser.de/Krebs.htm)

Serbia

In Carska bara swamp in the municipality of Zrenjanin, Serbia, according to investigations carried out by cryptozoologist Marko Sciban, strange monsters do dwell. "One night a Bosnian sailor called Slaven heard loud smashing sound, which he likened to the sound made by lots of tails hitting the water, accompanied by loud bubbling and croaking noises. Another man, Sima, who is responsible for this lake,

heard a loud smashing sound, which he likened to the sound made by lots of tails hitting the water, accompanied by loud bubbling and croaking noises. Another man, Sima, who is responsible for this lake, was so frightened that he fired several shots over the lake's surface. Both have suggested that a squid-like tentacle monster exists here." (*Fortean Times* 150, September 2001, p. 21; *Fortean Times* 276, June 2011, p. 80) The lake is 9 km long and has an area of 11,680 acres. Before WW II, the region was settled by Germans, and Zrenjanin was called Großbetschkerek. I checked all German and Austrian newspaper archives at my disposal, but could not trace any reports on lake monsters from this era.

United States

Writing about the "Legends of the Kiowa" in the *INFO Journal* 52, 1987, p. 10, Russel Bates mentions Salyer's Lake in Oklahoma. According to Kiowa knowledge, it held monsters which dragged swimmers into the depths: 'What little I know of them is that they are about the size of a horse, have several arms or tentacles and very tiny ears. Oddly, the are reddish-brown, look leathery, and make no sound at all, much like some kind of snail or slug that has no shell." According to Bates, the lake is still feared because many swimmers drown there. The *INFO Journal* 54, February 1988, p. 18 contains a reference to Lake Elizabeth in California where, in the 1880s, Don Felipe saw monster 44 feet long with a head like a bulldog … and six legs.

Octopus hoaxes

Again, for easy reference, I list these under the relevant country.

Italy

Like Lake Trasimeno and others, Lago di Vico is one of the large volcanic lakes in central Italy. Videos of a monster showing a hump above the surface (or is it only a dog out for a swim?) circulated on the Internet in the early 2000s. However, in August 2004, evidence of another monster was discovered there – a 30 m long tentacle of a "great giant squid". It was taken to the coroner's office, but became lost. Then director Sergio Stivaletti came forward and explained that it was a prop for a monster movie he shot at the place! The Viterbo police were particularly pleased because UFOs and a crocodile at the lake had been reported at the same time, so they now had at least one mystery less to solve. (*La Repubblica*, 20 August 2004, pp. 1 and 7).

police were particularly pleased because UFOs and a crocodile at the lake had been reported at the same time, so they now had at least one mystery less to solve. (*La Repubblica*, 20 August 2004, pp. 1 and 7).
Four years later it was a small lake in Sicily. A mysterious fish killer was reported on Lake Pergusa not far from Enna. The mystery was solved when a 7 m long squid was found in the lake – but this time the report was made on April 1st, and that probably saves further investigation! (*vivienna.it*, April 1, 2008).

United States
This could also have been under the previous heading, but there was a time when stories circulated about strange miniature squid-like creatures that were created, ex nihio, in toxic waste at Anderson, Indiana; USA: (*Strange* 18, p. 28; *Fortean Times* 108, p. 19)

MAPPING OUT THE NANDI BEAR

Shuker Nature

April 27th 2022

Close-up of the Nandi bear depiction on John McKenzie's 1961 map East Africa (© John McKenzie – reproduced here on a strictly non-commercial Fair Use basis for educational/review purposes only)

Last year on ShukerNature, in my extensive documentation of what may well be the single most significant episode ever recorded concerning Kenya's most infamous cryptid...the ferocious Nandi bear, I made particular reference to an article on this elusive creature by Gordon Boy that had been published in the October-November 1998 issue of the periodical *SAFARI Magazine*.

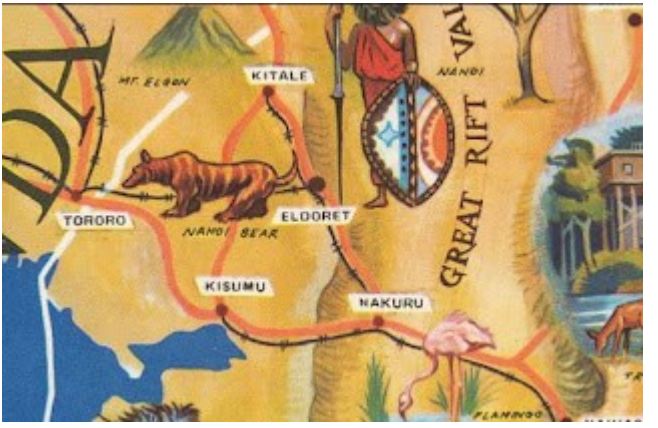
However, in his *SAFARI* article, Boy included one additional but fascinating Nandi bear nugget that I specifically didn't allude to in my own. This was because I felt that it deserved its very own, separate coverage on ShukerNature (and also because I wanted to research it further first, which I have since done). So here it is now.

East Africa, John McKenzie's map that contains the tantalizing Nandi bear depiction (© John McKenzie – reproduced here on a strictly non-commercial Fair Use basis for educational/review purposes only)

Boy stated that an illustrated full-colour map of East Africa by John McKenzie and simply entitled *East Africa* (see above scan of it) included a depiction of a strange-looking creature that was actually labeled on it as a Nandi bear. He also stated that the map had been produced in 1952. In reality, however, when I researched this item, I discovered that it had actually been produced in 1961, not 1952, in Nairobi, Kenya; its printer/engraver was East African Standard Ltd.

Boy included a reduced-size reproduction of the entire map in his article (the map's full size is 70 cm by 57 cm), but this reproduction is not big enough for the individual animal depictions in it to be anything other than minuscule. When enlarged, however, they are all rendered

other than minuscule. When enlarged, however, they are all rendered clear enough to be readily identifiable with known species – all, that is, except for the Nandi bear depiction, which does not resemble any species currently known to science. Nor, for that matter, does it correspond with any eyewitness description of the Nandi bear.



Nandi bear depiction shown in situ geographically on McKenzie's map *East Africa* (© John McKenzie – reproduced here on a strictly non-commercial Fair Use basis for educational/review purposes only)

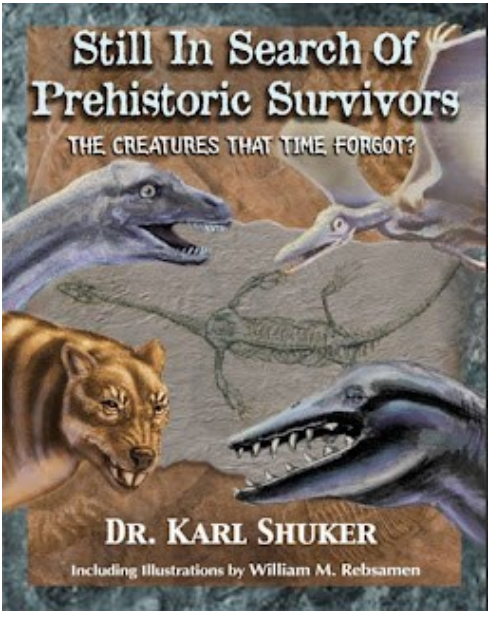
To quote Boy's brief account of it:

On McKenzie's map, the Nandi bear illustration appears north of Eldoret, on the Uasin Gishu Plateau [in western Kenya]. The illustration shows a massive, dog-like quadruped, with short hair, of a banded brown-and-yellow colour, and with very stocky limbs, a humped back, and a sharply pointed snout. But what is the Nandi bear doing here? It is, after all, the only creature depicted on this map whose existence, even now, has not been verified by science. Or was its inclusion just a mischievous prank on the map-maker's part? The legend of the Nandi bear is not without its pranksters...

bear is not without its pranksters...
This is very true. However, tempering Boy's above statement is another one made by him when introducing his account of McKenzie's map:

The Nandi bear is pictured on some of the old illustrated wildlife maps of East Africa, published during the Colonial era.
In short, there are other old maps out there somewhere that also contain Nandi bear depictions, which in turn reduces the possibility that its included portrayal on the McKenzie example was merely a prank. Needless to say, I have sought to uncover such maps, but as yet I have not succeeded in doing so. Consequently, if anyone reading this ShukerNature blog article of mine knows of any or can offer relevant information concerning them, I'd greatly welcome details.

For the most comprehensive modern-day coverage of the Nandi bear in published form, be sure to check out my book ***Still In Search Of Prehistoric Survivors***.



Interview with Carol Scott author of The Cryptids of Asia and Oceania(see back cover)

1. How did you first become interested in cryptozoology?

   I was moving to the United States from Canada in 2001 and my family and I happened to catch several episodes of Animal X at our hotel. While I don't recall the particular episodes, the show had an immediate effect on me, and I've been hooked on cryptozoology ever since. My parents were always very supportive and bought me every book I asked for (I had quite a huge collection of Loren Coleman books!) and even took me to several conferences.

2. What particularly interests you in the cryptozoology of Asia and Oceania?

   This might seem a bit contradictory, but it's the lack of information for many of them – that's why I set out to collect as much information as possible to make it easier for future researchers to go even further with their work on these cryptids.

   Even something like the Yeti, one of the most famous cryptids, has a lot of knowledge gaps. I was shocked by how few western sources gave any attention to the traditional beliefs of the local population – most accounts of the Yeti start off with mountaineers exploring the region in the 20th century.

   One thing that I mention in the book is the difficulty researchers have with these cryptids due to funding, language differences, and preservation concerns. If someone reads the book and wants to research, say, the Kting voar from Vietnam, they might want to go one step further then I did in the book and actually go to the area, interview locals, look for evidence, and so on. Think of the cost of the flight, miscellaneous transportation, shelter, food

to go one step further then I did in the book and actually go to the area, interview locals, look for evidence, and so on. Think of the cost of the flight, miscellaneous transportation, shelter, food – and that's all assuming the person in question can speak Vietnamese and doesn't need a translator.

I hope the book encourages more people to look into these creatures – perhaps crowdfunding expeditions or research trips.

3. What cryptid do you think will be most likely to be discovered in the area covered by your book?

The orang pendek would be my #1 bet. There are sightings reported by scientists in the area, as well as local people and travelers. Additionally, the creature is in a prime location to be undiscovered, due to the forested areas and lack of researchers.

4. What is your opinion of paranormal entitles within cryptozoology?

I wouldn't say I have too much of an opinion aside from the fact that I don't ascribe to the idea of Bigfoot or other cryptids being aliens. I think, as long as all researchers are doing their best to collect and preserve evidence, everyone can get along while we figure out what's what in the cryptozoology world.

5. Which particular cryptozoology books/magazines/podcasts do you follow?

I love the older Heuvelmans and Sanderson books, as well as more modern books by people such as Lyle Blackburn and Nick Redfern. I'm generally more of a book reader than anything else.

The Mandela Effect

Loes Modderman

Sometimes I really can't help being amused by the newest fad.
We have all heard about the existence of the *'Mandela Effect'*. It's all over the internet, and like every internet meme it is spreading fast. Suddenly thousands, no, millions of people are experiencing something weird: their memory seems to be off, and they remember things slightly differently from the facts today. It's not really clear to me if they remember things differently from other people's changed memories, or that the different perspective is a shared one.

We all know who Mandela was. The Internet tells me there are people who are adamant that Mandela died in 1988, while in reality he died only three years ago, in 2013.(N.B. This was written in 2016) Hence the name: Mandela Effect.Many years ago, about 30 years ago, I think, but in the light of our timeshift phenomenon it could be 31, here on Dutch television there was a very thorough documentary about memory. I remember, (and I am sure I remember correctly) that there were many people speaking about their memories being different from real happenings.
Not because of any weird effect, but simply because humans are in the habit of adapting their memories in the course of their lives. We all know how some early memories are sometimes indistinguishable from the stories we heard all our lives. Hearing those stories over and over again may give us the feeling that we experienced those events ourselves.
Anyone with brothers and sisters must be familiar with the fact that , stories differ when speaking about family experiences from childhood.Every person has his own memories about how something happened, when, who was there, etc. Depending on the importance of an event for every individual, recollections vary. And the power of recollection varies too.
Try pinpointing if something happened when you were 6 or 7, and you have to rely on other facts of that time, your master at school, your friends, to know when it was. Was it summer? Winter? Details are always hard to remember, even with events from a few years ago. I could be wrong thinking it was only 5 years since this or that

your friends, to know when it was. Was it summer? Winter? Details are always hard to remember, even with events from a few years ago. I could be wrong thinking it was only 5 years since this or that happened, it could easily be 7. " Really, so long ago already?" we wonder. "I could have sworn... Time flies, doesn't it?"

As for the 'Mandela Effect' - I don`t know when the name was born, but it has spread in no time, and suddenly people are 'recognising' the feeling en masse. Next is the connection with the cause of the 'mystery', and the most prevalent theory is, as far as I know, that it has to do with CERN and the LHC.
Now is the LHC definitely a cause for worry, as are many things where scientists are free to experiment and conscience is safely left behind? But there is no proof that this Mandela Effect has anything to do with whatever people experience, nor if it exists at all, and since many people are freely speculating with their common sense tucked away outside their brains, the meme spreads.
The conclusion: the gap between dimensions is widening, and the proof for that 'fact' is that one person remembers something in dimension A, while another remembers the same fact in dimension B. Articles are written about it, books are published and sites are gathering the accounts of people.
It's funny, really.
For when I looked at a Mandela Effect site, curious as to what these 'proofs' were, I found hilariously little substantiality.
Let me give a few examples: *words that are spelled differently than someone remembered*. Oh, jee, this is more serious than we thought, for looking at spelling it seems that almost all English (and Dutch) speakers occasionally shift dimensions when they are writing.
A cartoon figure, a kind of monkey without a tail is remembered with a tail. Big deal. Of course it is. Monkeys have tails, and when one hasn't our brain adds one. There is no psychologist in the world who would doubt our ability to 'correct' something in our memory *because it is logical*.
Mona Lisa is remembered without a smile, and now she has one.
Well, that is serious! Maybe those people who think they never saw the smile should consider they never looked close enough. And then, Mona Lisa isn't exactly grinning. What makes this painting so famous is exactly that mysterious 'does she smile or doesn't she' quality.

smile should consider that they never looked close enough. And then, Mona Lisa isn't exactly grinning. What makes this painting so famous is exactly that mysterious 'does she smile or doesn't she' quality.Another one: *does Darth Vader say "Luke, I am your father"* as many remember? No, he says *"No, I am your father."*
The real sentence is far less smooth, while the first one is. So we remember the first one.
It's *exactly* the same as StarTrek`s *"Beam me up, Scotty"*, an expression widely used, while in reality what is said is *"Scotty, beam me up"*. Remember, that sentence is 50 years old, when the LHC was not in the picture but our tendency to adapt expressions for easy use was.
The last example is really something. It's about *Moses, who is sometimes pictured with horns*, while on other paintings he is without. Absolutely definitely a case of ongoing dimensional shift.
It doesn't occur to the writer to google the subject: the horns are the mistranslation in Latin of the Hebrew word *'Kerenim*' that means horns as well as beams of light. Moses` face was beaming, of course. But the horns stuck.

I could go on and on.
But let's just place our commonsense back where it belongs: with our critical faculties.
I'm personnally convinced that there are many dimensions, and weird things happen. But in order to understand even the slightest bit of our complex reality we shouldn't run after every meme that spreads like wildfire.
Without the Mandela Effect there are plenty of mysteries left.

From Washington D.C. Longworth building October 4th 1994 Mandela`s first trip to the United States. Wikipedia Creative Commons.

Rats like to Dance

Marc Reigns

Bizarre as may seem rats love to dance to the same music as humans. Scientists believe this may prove animals gave their inbuilt rhythm. The scientists placed motion sensors on rat heads, 10 and 20 people's heads and played on them Mozart's Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major. Both the rats and humans bobbed along in the same way as listened at 123 beats per minute. This study done by a Japanese scientist showed the rats danced less when the piece was slowed down or sped up. Professor Hirokazu Takahashi, University of Tokyo said (This is the first report of innate beat synchronisation in animals without training or musical exposure. They displayed it most within 120 to 140 bpm which humans also exhibit the clearest synchronisation.) The Professor believe that rats are genetically programmed to feel human music as the brain's auditory cortex is similarly tuned .

Above: Brown Rat . Wikipedia Creative Commons

Notes & Queries

A Pine Marten in London
September 8th 2022

Pine marten spotted in London for first time in more than a century

Endangered animal caught by ZSL camera intended for hedgehogs in woodland in south-west of capital https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/08/pine-marten-spotted-in-london-for-first-time-in-more-than-a-century

A pine marten has been spotted in London for the first time in more than a century after being pictured on a camera trap installed to monitor hedgehogs.

The endangered mustelid was driven to extinction in England a hundred years ago and was only sighted again for the first time in the Shropshire hills in 2015, remaining an extremely rare animal.

This particular pine marten was caught on camera in a woodland in south-west London where cameras were installed by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) as part of the London HogWatch project to monitor and conserve the capital's hedgehog population. "As part of our ongoing hedgehog monitoring work, we deploy camera traps

across woodlands," said Kate Scott-Gatty, research assistant or ZSL and London HogWatch. "In this area, these are usually set off by the movement of common species such as foxes and badgers, so you can imagine our surprise at seeing a pine marten – a species usually only glimpsed in Scotland and northern England."

Telling the bees about Queen Elizabeth 2nd`s death

This item of news featured widely in the British media around the time of the Queen`s death on September 8th 2022. Here is one example,below,from the Yahoo! Sport web site: **Queen Elizabeth`s bees had to be informed of her death in accordance with tradition** (https://uk.sports.yahoo.com/news/queen-elizabeth-bees-had-informed-175200453.html?guc-counter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAADUScnl0n4Ghpm9c50TqmVSZe3Vwqv0ewddHBslsbAMl4Bg0jVt4a2iHZE0anAY57fKlyPGOSBlM4lHPzSqcwLbHTs6LnXP3JUWOV6Eii3HSwmC3JtL4m43Uy-kDNgiNc68EJYlJ-HHn0UrpARt812JQcRt35rBnDfjnWrYKKggf)

September 18th 2022

"Even the royal bees are mourning the death of Queen Elizabeth II. In a new report from *The Daily Mail*, royal beekeeper John Chapple revealed that he was required to inform the royal hive at Buckingham Palace and Clarence House of Queen Elizabeth's passing in accordance with a tradition that dates back centuries. "I'm at the hives now and it is traditional when someone dies that you go to the hives and say a little prayer and put a black ribbon on the hive," Chapple said…"

Panther Spotted in Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire Advertiser

August 25th 2022

Thanks to Richard George

On Wednesday,August 17 at around midday driving out of Lilley towards Offley, I saw a large black panther. It was long, higher than a Great Dane and walked quickly with its stride like a big cat—100 per cent black panther. I called Whipsnade Zoo to report the sighting. I am 67 and I am being very serious.

James Paddon

By email.

Stowaway Squirrel

Daily Telegraph

September 2nd 2022

Thanks to Richard George

A stowaway squirrel is being cared for by an animal rescue charity after travelling thousands of miles from India to Scotland on board a ship. It is believed the animal spent about three weeks on the vessel and was finally caught by the crew three days before Deep Explorer docked in Aberdeen on Tuesday. Keith Marley of the North East Wildlife & Animal Rescue Centre said the crew fed the palm squirrel after he was "taken into custody" near the end of the voyage. " I believe he had been spotted before then but he is faster than a fast thing so he took a bit of effort to catch," said Mr Marley. The speedy animal has been named Zippy.

The Courier and Advertiser

(Dundee)

October 5th 1926

© British Newspaper Archive

GIANT SNAKE LOOSE IN TRAIN

LONDON PASSENGERS' STAMPEDE

18-Foot Reptile Caught and Caged

Considerable excitement was caused at Paddington Station, London, yesterday afternoon on the arrival of the boat train from Plymouth, on which Mr Mitchell Hedges and Lady Richmond Brown, the explorers, travelled to London with some of their specimens.

When the train stopped, Mr Mitchell Hedges and one of the guards went into the special van attached to the train in which the specimens were being carried, only to leave it very hurriedly on discovering that an 18 feet boa constrictor, destined for the Zoo, was loose.

A crowd quickly gathered and pressed closely round the carriage, while the doors were shut.

Mr Hedges and Lady Brown, with one of the porters, went into the carriage and pulled out the case in which the reptile had travelled, placing it on the platform at the door. They then opened the case, revealing two large snakes within, and then, while Mr Hedges, with a woollen garment which Lady Brown handed to him, held the snake's neck, Lady Brown picked up the centre coils of the reptile, and together they heaved it partly into the box.

The crowd scattered and showed some signs of panic, but before this could develop the explorer had caught the tail of the snake, thrown it into the box, and slammed the lid.

Blue shark in Cornish River

https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/blue-shark-found-cornwalls-river-7479661

Blue shark found in Cornwall`s River Fal `got a little lost`

August 18th 2022

“A blue shark which was spotted in Cornwall's River Fal yesterday is believed to have "got a little lost". The majestic creature was spotted by visitors at Trelissick Garden, near Feock, yesterday.

Blue sharks are common in UK waters from June to October, however, they do not tend to get this close to beaches. Despite an incident earlier this summer which saw a blue shark bite a snorkeler during a 'shark dive' experience off Penzance, they do not tend to attack humans either.

The shark was spotted at lunchtime. "Silently, slowly and elegantly this blue shark just sort of swam by," witness Harry Gooby told BBC Radio Cornwall…”

Early view of Hong Kong`s fauna

Thanks to Ulrich Magin

It has been some time, but I am currently going through old newspapers, and I found at least one tiny item, not really impressive, but here it is: *Jagd-Zeitung (Austria), 15 May 1859, p. 18* :

Sollte aber irgend einen Kameraden seine Bestimmung nach Hongkong fuhren, so möge er es sich gesagt sein lassen, daß man dort wenigstens gegen Wild keine Büchse braucht. Ich traue mir eine Wette einzugehen, daß auf der ganzen

Insel Hong-kong kein anderer Vierfüßler existirt, als die gewöhnlichen Hausthiere mit Einschluß der zahlreichen, nach der Aussage der Chinesen sehr schmackhaften Ratten. Es geht eine dunkle Sage, im Innern des Eilands gäbe es einige Hirsche, diese Sage gehört aber ins Gebiet der Seeschlange. Vom Juli bis Dezember verweilte ich dort und habe kein anderes Wild gesehen, als ein paar chinesische Wachteln auf dem Markte zu Victoria, die ich aber sehr im Verdachte habe, von außen eingeführt worden zu sein.

In English:

But if any of your comrades should go to Hong Kong, let them know that they do not need a rifle there, at least for game. I dare to bet that on the whole island of Hong-Kong there are no quadrupeds other than the common domestic animals, including the numerous rats, which the Chinese say are very tasty. There is a dark legend that there are some deer in the interior of the island, but this legend belongs to the territory of the sea serpent. I stayed there from July to December, and saw no other game but a few Chinese quails in the Victoria market, which I very much suspect, however, of having been imported from abroad.

Will be further on the look-out!

All the best, Ulrich

Mermaid or inland seal?

Kingston Daily Freeman

June 27th 1905

Esopus Lake is in New York state

While some gentlemen were fishing in Esopus lake Saturday afternoon they were astonished to see a strange animal or fish lift its heael high out ot the water every few minutes. The head was as large as that of a young man, and in fact one of ihe men thought it was his son in the water, but on rowing toward it the strange creature- disappeared. Oihers have seen a similar object before anel have even thought it might be a mermaid passing the summer in that beautiful lake.

Deer's Feet Grow On Duck 's Body

Scarsdale Enquirer December 1st 1939

Fitz Jeffers, colored porter of the Printer Wick's establishment, had a time of it last week on the day before Thanksgiving. He had been told by Bill Wick to run over to the butcher's for a duck for the Jeffers' family dinner on Thursday. And he was to bring it back to the print shop. Fitz came running back with a package from the top of which protruded a large duck's head, with two deer's feet dangling from the bottom. With his natural dark suntan turning slightly gray, Fitz backed away from the strange animal and refused to consider it fit for the Jeffers family to eat until the package was opened and the regular standard duck was revealed. "I didn't like the idea of a duck with deer feet," said Fitz, "but it turned out to be a good duck." He didn't reveal whether he used the deer's feet for soup meat or in place of a rabbit's foot for good luck.

Black frogs of Chernobyl

Chernobyl`s black frogs recall a dark day

The Times October 7th 2022

“ As you approach Chernobyl,the Geiger counters get noisier, the people get sparser and, a study has found,the frogs get blacker. Tree frogs around the site of the nuclear accident appear to have evolved more protective skin pigmentation ,possibly to help them to survive in the aftermath of the radiation leak...Just as darker skin is able to protect humans from the effects of solar radiation, so it is believed to offer a buffer against the radiation experienced in the aftermath of the accident…”

Bird resembling the Passenger Pigeon in Bermuda

Rough notes and Memoranda relating to the natural history of the Bermudas by John Matthew Jones 1897

“Dr Cole mentions having met with a strange bird in the Governor`s Marsh , resembling the Passenger`s Pigeon of Wilson. He was not fortunate enough to get a shot at it.”

Possum in New York state

The Greece Press (New York)December 7th 1950

Playing Possum

"Greece Police were puzzled Saturday night when William J. Blaschek reported that there was a strange animal on his porch at 109 Barnard Street. Officers Omar Lankford and Harry Scorse found a possum curled up in a corner of the porch. Using a blanket they got the possum into the police car and turned it loose in open country."

Remarkable Animal Freak

Hammond Advertiser June 15th 1922

"A strange animal is on exhibition in the St John`s Museum ,says a Newfoundland reader. It is a cat with the wings of a bird and was killed at Greenspond. It may be stated that the animal could not fly. "

Captured a Giant Frog

NATIVES OF CAZENOVIA GAPE AND WONDER AT A STRANGE REPTILE

The above are the headlines on an old newspaper clipping found among the papers of the late Robert F. Hubbard or Cazenovia by his son, R. James Hubbard. Neither the name nor the date of the newspaper are known It was not The Cazenovia Republican. Here is what the clipping says: A trackman on the Chenango Valley Railroad Sunday morning, at Cazenovia, found a freak which is supposed to have crawled out of the lake. The animal resembles a frog. It is fully as large as a good sized dog, and has eyes as large as silver dollars, the forelegs measure 1 foot and 10% inches, while one of the hind legs measures 2 feet and 1

morning, at Cazenovia, found a freak which is supposed to have crawled out of the lake. The animal resembles a frog. It is fully as large as a good sized dog, and has eyes as large as silver dollars, the forelegs measure 1 foot and 10 inches, while one of the hind legs measures 2 feet and 1 inch in length. The other leg was somewhat mangled, the animal having probably been run over by the cars, which ac- counts for the helpless condition in which it was found and which prob- ably made its capture easy. Nothing has ever been seen here be- fore which resembles in any way this creature, except the small frogs, and its name is thus far unknown, although several naturalists have examined the animal at the pumphouse, where it was placed in a box and was fed angle- worms, on which it feasted heartily. Its skin is as tough as iron and the muscles are very solid, more especial- ly the hind leg. which would naturally indicate that it had a tendency to jump like a frog The pumphouse, to which place the freak was taken, has been crowded with visitors each day, and a large number drive in from The country to sec it, some coming eight or ten miles It is not known what disposition will be made of the reptile. James Hubbard believes the story was a hoax, a joke on Barney Sulli- van, who is re- membered by some of Cazenovia's oldsters as the en- gineer at the old pumphouse at .the Chenango Valley railroad station 50 years or more ago. The engine pumped water from the lake into the tank which sup- plied the railroad engines. Barney lived in the pump- house and kept it neat as wax. He liked children. The pumphouse with its polished en- gine always was a place of fascination for them. Bar- ney, who had lost a leg, spent much of his time fishing from his flat bot- tom boat. It is recalled that he died in the pumphouse where he was found one morning."

The above story is from the Cazenovia Republican March 22nd 1951.The Chenango Valley Railroad is a defunct railway in New York State.

For giant toads see Flying Snake Vol 5 number 13 May 2018, for frog and toad Forteana in general see Animals and Men issue 44, 2008. Both by myself.

An Immortal Snake.
The Portville Autograph
September 21st 1906

" During the demolition by the Japanese authorities of a building known as Koo Cheun Kak, built many hundreds of years ago by the founder of the present Korean dynasty, an enormous snake emerg- ed from the hole left in the floor of the compound by tho removal of a stone weighing 1,000 pounds. It. began to travel around the compound with great rapidity, jumping over any walls that came in its way. Beven Japanese soldiers eventually killed it, and they then took the re- mains outside and burned them. Tliat night a green fog settled down over the city, and the seven soldiers who liad killed the snake are said to have died suddenly and mysteriously. After tho , soldiers were dead the snake again made its appearance, and, rusliing round and round tho houses and jumping over them, prevented any one from sleeping that night. What eventually be- came of the strange reptile is not related."—Korean Times.

A type of bat?

Daily Colonist October 6th 1878

A STRANGER—Captain Jones,of the schooner Industry, now unloading coal at Siffken`s wharf, has a strange animal on board. It has wings similar to those of a bat, a tail with a claw or hook at the end, a monkey-like face and a rat-like mouth. It has soft grey and black fur ,and bright black eyes. Altogether it is a queer looking specimen,and was picked up off Salt Spring island.when the schooner was a mile off shore. It had effected a lodgement on a ladder which hung over the schooner`s side ,and previously was seen swimming alongside. It is entirely unknown to the Indians ,and no naturalist hereabouts possesses any book that gives a description of a similar animal. By a late Canadian paper we observe that an animal answering exactly to the description of Capt Jones` pet was lately fished up from one of the lakes.

Salt Spring island is off the coast of British Columbia

A Double headed white snake in Uruguay

Through five republics on horseback being an account of many wanderings in South America

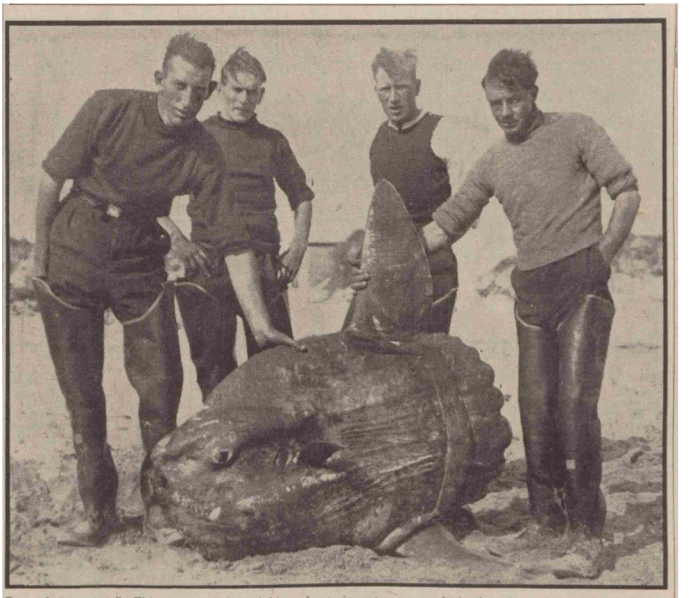
G.Whitfield Ray 1917

" I met with a snake, of a whitish colour,that appeared to have two heads. Never being able to closely examine this strange reptile, I cannot positively affirm that it possesses two heads, but the natives repeatedly affirmed to me that it does, and certainly both ends are, or seem to be , exactly alike."

A strange reptile near the Arkansas River

Life and adventures of L.D.Lafferty 1875

“ In one of his peregrinations about twenty miles out from the river, on a sandy ridge, he found a strange reptile which he killed and which he thus describes: “ It was about two and a half feet long, the head resembling a snake`s, with a body and forelegs resembling a lizard, the tail exactly like that of a rattle-snake. “ His Indian employer said two such creatures had been seen many years before.



Dornoch "monster."—This strange fish, weighing about six cwt., was caught in the salmon fishers' nets. It is believed to be the "monster" reported to have been seen in the Dornoch Firth a few days before.

ROYAL BREAKFAST AT DRUM

ABERDEEN PLANS A QUIET WELCOME

Quietly and without the formality of a civic party as in former years Aberdeen will welcome the Royal Family this morning on the final stage of their journey.

The train will arrive at Aberdeen at 7.30 a.m. There will be a ten minutes halt while the train is being switched on to the Deeside line, but it is not expected that their Majesties will leave their compartments.

The train will pull out from the city for Ballater at 7.40 a.m., and will be stopped at Drum where the Royal travellers will breakfast. This is a new departure in the Royal journey to Balmoral.

Special police precautions are being organised at Drum, Ballater, and other points along the route to Balmoral Castle.

SEA MONSTER CAUGHT AT DORNOCH

A MONSTER fish, weighing about 6 cwt., was caught by salmon fishermen employed on Dornoch Beach.

Mr Hugh Ross, the foreman, told a Press representative that the huge fish crashed into the land net. He and his three companions ran to the spot, and were surprised at the size of the fish. The tail is circular and serrated, the mouth is small, there are two fins, and the eyes are slightly larger than a half-crown.

It is thought that the fish is of the North Atlantic sun fish species.

Mr Ross said that as the fish reached the net water was sent fountain-like to a height of twenty-five feet.

BOMBAY GOES “DRY”

PROCESSIONS TO CELEBRATE

An era of complete prohibition throughout Bombay city and suburbs, an area of over 200 square miles, was ushered in at midnight.

The new law, which has the blessing of Mr Gandhi and other prominent Indians, came into operation smoothly and quietly, though there was an air of subdued excitement as "zero hour" approached.

Processions and meetings are being held to-day to celebrate the coming into force of prohibition. More than 800 of the 852 liquor shops in the area have now closed their doors.

Europeans who do not consider India their permanent home are exempted from the more drastic provisions of the new law, but will have their liquor rationed and obtainable only by special permits.

Sea Monster off Scotland

Press and Journal (Aberdeen) August 1st 1939

The fish was a sun fish.

© British Newspaper Archive

Giant grey frog in northern Borneo

Life in the Forests of the Far East volume 2

Spenser St John

page 77

1862

“ While preparing their tents , my men disturbed a huge frog that appeared about nine inches long; it was of a dark grey colour. I was assured,however, that a full-grown frog was double this size,and if one could judge of their dimensions by their noise, when they are heard in a marsh,one might readily believe the Murut`s account. I remember hearing the late Mr Hayes of Siam say that he had seen them there with bodies as large as a full sized dinner plate.”

A species of mammal new to Britain

Greater white-toothed shrew becomes U.K.`s first new mammal species in a century

Ecologists fear the species could threaten other animals of its kind

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/greater-white-tooth-shrew-mammal-species-b2212550.html

October 28th 2022

“The greater white-toothed shrew has become the UK’s first mammal species in a century after a social media post led to the animal’s discovery.

A Facebook picture of the animal caught by a cat led to the identification of the first non-native mammal to be established in the UK since the 1920s.

-tion of the first non-native mammal to be established in the UK since the 1920s. "

Below is an extract from The Daily Telegraph`s account of the discovery though unfortunately I do not have the exact date of the account. Thanks to **Richard George** for this.

Invasive shrew sneaks into UK and is killed by cat

The Daily Telegraph

"An invasive species of shrew has been seen for the first time in Britain by chance, after it was caught by a cat. The greater white-toothed shrew is usually found in western Europe and north Africa, but has now made its way to Sunderland, where it was dispatched by Jeff, a two-year-old rescue cat. Jeff`s owner, Melissa Young, posted pictures of her cat`s prize on social media last year, where it was recognised by ecologist Ian Bond...Ecologists are now asking for further sightings of the species, so that its impact on native shrew populations can be tracked."

Unusual jellyfish off Papua New Guinea

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/04/magnificent-jellyfish-found-off-coast-of-papua-new-guinea-sparks-interest-among-researchers

Thanks to Shane Lea August 4th 2022

"A diver has captured footage of an unusual-looking jellyfish off the coast of Papua New Guinea, sparking interest among researchers.

The video was captured by Dorian Borcherds, who owns Scuba Ventures in Kavieng, in the New Ireland province of PNG…."

Borcherds, who has been diving in the area for more than two decades, said he saw about three or four of the jellyfish and was struck by their intricate detail and the way they seemed to move decisively through the water.

Strange fish in County Donegal Ireland

Belfast Evening Telegraph November 5th 1906

STRANGE FISH CAUGHT NEAR RATHMULLAN.

Our illustration shows the remarkable fish caught between Rathmullan and Buncrana some days ago by a Rathmullan fisherman named Thomas Kelly. It weighs 62lbs., is 4ft. 8in. in length and 2½ft. in girth. The capture caused considerable excitement at Rathmullan, and it was a notable fact that of the many persons from far and near who viewed the fish not one could give it a name. Perhaps some reader could supply the information. (Photo by D. M'Monagle, Rathmullan.)

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E-MAILS AND LETTERS

E-mail from Richard George on bird omens Oct 22nd 2022

The Oxenham family's bird of ill omen, with its white breast, may well be the Ring Ouzel. I consulted Francesca Greenoak's 1979 book *All The Birds of the Air, as I usually do, and found some folk-lore from Orkney. Apparently the Ring Ouzel being seen near a home presages the death of its inhabitant (this is page 255).*

Further Ring Ouzel references in this regard:

Scottish Birds: The Journal of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Vol 1, Number 12 (Summer 1961), p.420

irishexaminer.com/property/homeandgardens/arid-30919147.html and the legendary Dartmoor web site. The ring ouzel,as a bird of moor and mountain,rarely approaches human habitation,which may have given its visits a mystique and engendered the myth.In the West

Country it is sometimes known as the Tor Ouzel.

Francesca Greenoak's book, by the way, is an absolute trove of bird lore and especially bird dialect names, some of which are wonderfully bizarre.All best, Richard

Letter from Richard George on white-toothed shrew etc October 31st 2022

" A couple of items from the Daily Telegraph that might intrigue you…

On the shrew,first of all. The Greater White-toothed Shrew is not actually new to Britain,as it has for some years lived on the Channel Islands of Guernsey,Herm and Alderney (MacDonald and Barrett, *Collins Guide* p. 36 mammal.org.uk/species-hub/full-species-hub/discover-mammals/species-greater-white-toothed-shrew). (See pages 19-20 of this issue of Flying Snake—Richard)

It may well not be new to the mainland either, as possible reports from the North-East date from at least as early as 2015 (birdguides.com/news/shrew-photographed-in-sunderland-is-new-to-britain). From 2007,it had spread rapidly in Ireland (pure.qub.ac.uk/en/publications/first-record-of-greater-white-toothed-shrew-crocidura-russula-in-Ireland).

As for the Somerset Gimp...other than "Gordon Blimey" what is there to say? How many unexplained entities, in the West Country or elsewhere,have actually been people in skin-tight fetish suits? And what about the Shadow People? A couple of earlier references to (presumably) the same geezer:

unilad.com/news/man-in-gimp-suit-walking-around-grunting-and-touching-his-genitals;daily record.co.uk/news/weird-news/man-gimp-suit-distressing-villagers-18211588 (both of these from 2019)

Letters to Fate

Thanks to Gary Mangiacopra

March 1961,Volume 14,Number 3,Issue 132

More Mysteries

Dominica is an obscure island of 305 square miles in the British West Indies. Since September,the island has been shaken by mysterious earth tremors that geophysicists have not been able to explain. The tremors occur at irregular intervals, and in bursts of two or three to hundreds. They can start any time,and the average of the quiet interim periods is about seven days. Seismologists G.R.Robson and K.G. Barr of University College in Trinidad have appealed to geophysicists for help in explaining the mysterious tremors, which they say are quite unlike the tremors produced by earthquakes or explosions.

Dominica is a volcanic island but there have been no volcanic eruptions there in recorded time.Even the ancient volcanic centers are nowhere near the apparent source of the tremors. Such studies as have been made by Robson and Bart point to the tremors originating from a single point within a circle about three miles in diameter. This circle runs through the town but the town is on a river delta of sand and gravel which is not volcanic material.

The scientists, according to the authoritative technical journal **Nature** , are convinced that the tremors are not of volcanic origin but they say “We cannot put forward an alternative explanation.”

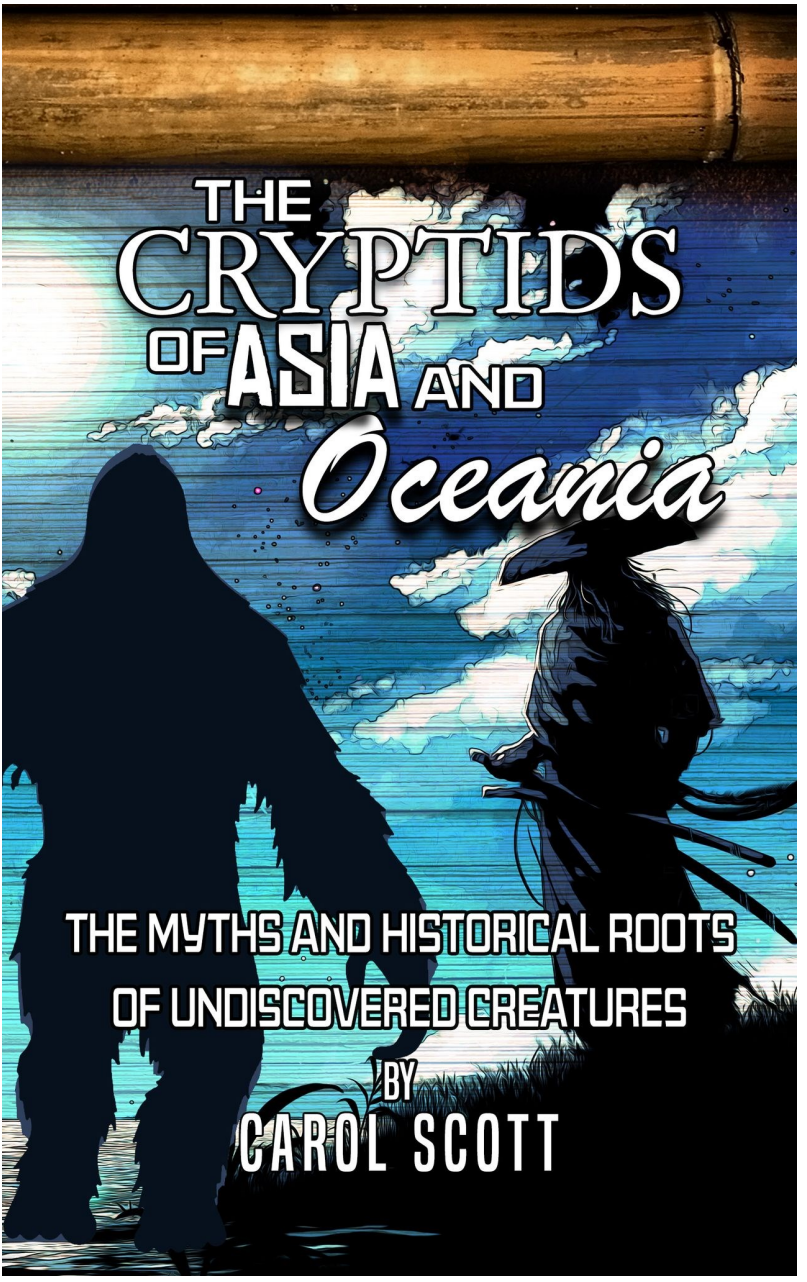
May 1962,Volume 15,Number 5,Issue 146
Ball Lightning

Since Fate ran a brief note on ball lightning a few months ago we received a great many letters asking for more information about this unusual prank of nature. David Dietz,in the Cleveland Press, recently commented that meteorologists would be more inclined to believe the stories of the amazing behaviour of ball lightning if they saw it once themselves. Only three of 100 letters that Dietz received describing ball lightning fitted the “classical” description.

In one incident,while pupils were singing in school during a thunderstorm, a ball of lightning the size of a dinner plate came into the room through a window directly behind the platform on which the assistant principal was conducting and hovered over her head. In a moment it was gone-just seemed to fade out.

Another letter to Mr Dietz described a ball of fire that entered a Long Island living room where a husband and wife were sitting. The ball came in through an open window,rolled along the floor,crossed the room and went out through a door. A third incident occurred in a summer camp where a ball the size of a full moon floated gently down from the sky to the top of the camp`s flagpole. There it exploded on contact.

General Electric observers, filming lightning strikes of the tower of the Empire State Building,once saw a bluish ball of fire slowly descend the tower.



Available on Amazon , Abebooks and elsewhere